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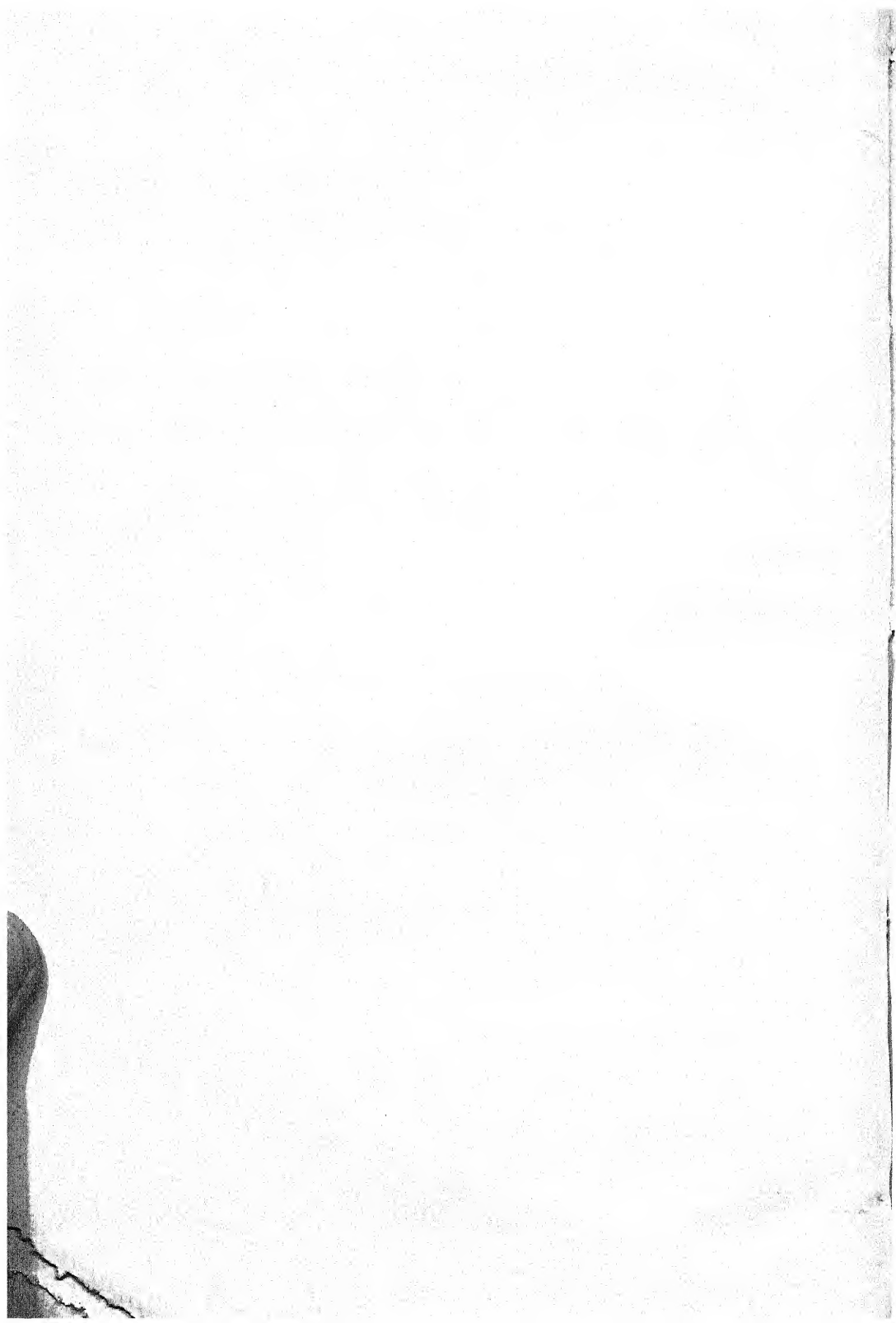
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Dedicated  
to the  
Memory of our friend  
**Dr. Panchanan Mitra**  
who guided the work of the  
Anthropology Department  
for many years with success.



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## PREFACE

The present volume of " Anthropological Papers " appears three years after the previous volume (No. 5) edited by my predecessor in office. My apology for the long interval is that the present number is entirely a record of research work of members of the departmental staff and of advanced students working under their guidance. Many papers which could have been incorporated in another complete volume earlier, have also been published in the interval, in the journals of various learned bodies, in India and abroad.

The thanks of the department are due to the University authorities for continuing their publication grant.

My own thanks are due to my colleagues who have shared with me the work of editing the papers and reading the proofs.

K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY,  
Head of the Department of Anthropology,  
Calcutta University.

*The 23rd April 1941.*



# KHASI KINSHIP AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

BY

PROF. K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY.

## *Introduction*

In a paper on Khasi marriage rules Prof. Hodson has tried to explain the special features of the Khasi kinship terms and marriage rules on the hypothesis of a former dual division of Khasi Society, and certain new social forces which came into operation when the dual society broke up (1).

Hodson used for his work, the kinship terms noted in the Assam Census Report (2), Gurdon's work on Khasis (3) and a dictionary by U. Nissorsing. A full list of Khasi kinship terms was published by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy shortly afterwards (4). The list is stated to have been compiled with the help of the ex-Siem of Cherra, on the genealogical method. The genealogies have not however been printed, and detailed notes are not available.

Recently the writer of this paper proceeded to the village of Mawphlang, the head-quarters of the Khasi State of this name and collected a certain amount of data to discuss this problem. The village is situated to the southwest of Shillong, at a distance of sixteen miles, and has preserved the old customs to a fair extent. It is ruled over by a lyngdoh or priest-chief, assisted by four myntris. At the time of the visit, the lyngdoh was away, suspended by the Political Agent for misgovernment, and the powers of the State were vested in the council of myntris. The senior myntri U Subu Rai, who is an old man

nearly seventy years of age, spoke English a little, and kindly agreed to help by acting as introducer as well as interpreter. The Chowkidar of the bungalow, a Christian Khasi who spoke Hindi tolerably well was however our principal interpreter. Before proceeding to the village, I had studied Roberts' Khasi Grammar and also learnt simple sentences in Khasi necessary for collecting genealogies, kinship terms and connected details, like the inheritance of the ancestral house and lands. This portion of the data was collected entirely through questions and answers in Khasi; the other details were obtained with the help of myntri U Subu Rai and his friends and the Chowkidar, U Hudrington. On important points however, some checking was made, by simple questions in Khasi, which involved definite answers in the affirmative or negative. My students who had accompanied me for training in field studies, repeated some of my observations, in my presence and with my help and guidance.

My best thanks are due to Mr. K. Cantlie, Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, for furnishing me with the letter of introduction to U Subu Rai and for other facilities. His published notes on Khasi law, especially the chapters on inheritance also proved to be of great value in carrying out the enquiries (5). In the subsequent portions of this article, references to the works of Gurdon and Cantlie, will be indicated merely by (G) and (CN) respectively.



## CHAPTER I

According to traditions preserved by the local people, the Iangblah clan were the first settlers in Mawphlang. The Lyngdohs were invited to come and settle as the Iangblahs wanted priests to perform proper worship for their village. Other clans came later and settled in the State. These old clans are known as Khadar Kur. Myntris are elected from the following four clans—Iangblah, Khar Shiing, Khar Hunai and Khar Sohlia. The above traditions of the origin of the settlement were furnished by the myntri U Subu Rai, his sister's husband U Alisson and others. The list of Khadar Kur furnished by the myntri is noted below :—

- |                  |                      |                    |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| (1) Iangblah.    | (2) Lyngdoh.         | (3) Khar Shiing.   |
| (4) Khar Hunai   | (5) Khar Sohlia.     | (6) Khar Phannap.  |
| (7) Khar Kynnie. | (8) Khar Sahkhar.    | (9) Marbaniang.    |
| (10) Khar Narbi. | (11) Khar Mawphlang. | (12) Khar Syntiew. |

The genealogy of myntri U Subu Rai, of myntri U Orong Singh and others are shown at the end of this chapter. In collecting kinship terms, three questions were asked of the informant :

- (i). What is the relationship of B to the informant A (and of A to B). This is shown in the tables as the kinship term.
- (ii). What the informant A called B (and conversely). This is shown in the tables as the term of address.
- (iii). How the informant A referred to the relationship of B to C, another relative. This is shown as the term of reference.

Generally the terms for (i) and (iii) are the same. In a few instances a distinction was said to be made. Many people however do not observe such distinctions. In the list of kinship terms published by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, this distinction has not been made. While his list agrees with mine in many respects, there are important differences. He has noted certain identities in kinship terms, which I did not find, and which have not been noted also in the Census Report.

The kinship system of the Khasis has certain special features :

(a) There is a clear distinction drawn in the kinship terms, with regard to seniority and juniority in age between siblings. This distinction is also made in the generation above that of the speaker, with regard to the mother's sisters, and father's brothers and their spouses. It is also observed with regard to the mother's brothers but not with regard to the father's sisters or the spouses, or their children. The distinction is however observed throughout in terms of address.

(b) A woman refers to her sister's children by the same term as a man to his brother's children; but a woman refers to her brother's children by a different term, which is applied also by her brother to her children.

(c) Certain kin are grouped together. The same term, for example is applied to the mother, step mother, the mother's sisters, and the wives of the brothers of the father. Similarly, the father, the step father, the father's brothers and the husbands of the mother's sisters are grouped together. In both cases, the actual father and mother are referred to by a term, to which adjectives denoting seniority and juniority are added for the other relatives. The mother's brother and the father's sister's husband have a common term. But the mother's brother is always distinguished by adding the adjective of age noting his position as elder or younger uncle. The father's sister's husband is not so distinguished. The sister of the father is clearly distinguished

from the wife of mother's brother by a term denoting relationship through the father. The mother's brother's wife was stated by my informants in Mawphlang not to be denoted by the term "Kha" or "Knia Kha" which was applied only to the father's sister. She was merely Knia.

(d) A man and his wife applied to the brothers and sisters of the spouse, with one exception the same terms (with a term added to qualify) of relationship as for own brothers and sisters. This practice is extended also to the children of these relatives. The exception occurs with regard to the term used by a man towards his sister's husband, and by the latter to him. It is a single special term, the distinction extending to the term of address. In the other cases, the qualifying term even is dropped in address and no distinction is then made between a sister and the wife's sister, or a brother and the husband's brother.

In order to appreciate the significance of features of Khasi Kinship, it is necessary to note in brief, the rules of descent, inheritance, and succession among the Khasis. An excellent summary of these have been given by Gurdon. The rules of inheritance and land tenure have been further elucidated by Cantlie and others in the work already mentioned. I shall illustrate essential points in the next chapter with reference to the genealogies included in this paper, and also note certain additional details which were observed by me.

Abbreviations used in the kinship table are those employed in an earlier paper. They are noted below :—

F—father.	M—mother.	B—brother.
S—sister.	Z—son.	D—daughter.
H—husband.	W—wife.	C—child.
e—elder.	y—younger.	o—older.
m.s.—man speaking.	w.s.—woman speaking.	

The prefixes U and Ka have not been noted in the case of most of the kinship terms as superfluous.

In the genealogies Ka before a name denotes a woman, and U, a man. Hence no special symbols have been used to distinguish sex. Abbreviations used are :—

d.—dead.

n.r.—not remembered.

n.k.—not known.

d.y.—died young.

unm—unmarried.

n.i.—no issue.

Unless the village of birth is stated to be otherwise, it is Mawphlang.

Relationship	Kinship term	Term of address	Term of reference
F.	U Kpa	I Kpa or Ko Kpa.	— (a)
Z.	U Khun.	Ko Khun.	—
D.	Ka Khun.	Ko Khun.	—
M.	I Mei.	I Mei.	Ka Kmie. (b)
M.e S.	Mei San.	Ko Mei San.	Ka Kmie San.
M.y.S.	Mei Nah.	Ko Mei Nah.	Ka Kmie Nah.
y.S.z. (w.s.)	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—
e.S.Z. (w.s.)	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—
y.S.D. (w.s.)	"	"	—
e.S.D. (w.s.)	"	"	—
M.e.B.	Ma Rangbah.	I Ma Rangbah.	U Kni. (c)
M.y.B.	Ma Khynnah.	I Ma Khynnah.	U Kni.
y.S.Z. (m.s.)	Pyrsa.	Ko Pyrsa.	—
e.T.Z. (m.s.)	Pyrsa.	Ko Pyrsa.	—
y.S.D. (m.s.)	"	"	—
e.S.D. (m.s.)	"	"	—
M.e.B.W.	I Nia.	Ko Nia.	Nia.
H.e.S.Z.	Pyrsa.	Ko Pyrsa.	—
H.y.S.Z.	"	"	—
H.e.S.D.	"	"	—
H.y.S.D.	"	"	—
M.e.S.H.	Pa San.	Ko Pa San.	—

Relationship.	Kinship term.	Term of address.	Term of reference.
M.y.S.H.	Pa. Khynnah or Pa Nah.	Ko Pa Khynnah or Ko Pa Nah.	—
W.y.S.Z.	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—
W.e.S.Z.	"	"	—
W.y.S.D.	"	"	—
W.e.S.D.	"	"	—
F.e.B.	Pa San.	Ko Pa San.	—
F.y.B.	Pa Khynnah.	Ko Pa Khynnah.	—
y.B.Z. (m.s.)	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—
e.B.Z. (m.s.)	"	"	—
e.B.D. (m.s.)	"	"	—
y.B.D. (m.s.)	"	"	—
F.e.B.W.	Mei San.	Ko Mei San.	Ka Kmie San.
F.y.B.W.	Mei Nah.	Ko Mei Nah.	Ka Kmie Nah.
H y.B.Z.	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—
H.e.B.Z.	"	"	—
H.y.B.D.	"	"	—
H.e.B.D.	"	"	—
F.e.S.	I Kha.	I Nia Kha.	— (d)
F.y.S.	I Kha.	I Nia Kha.	—
y.B.Z. (w.s.)	Pyrsa.	Ko Pyrsa.	—
e.B.Z. (w.s.)	"	"	—
y.B.D. (w.s.)	"	"	—
e.B.D. (w.s.)	"	"	—
F.S.H.	Ma.	Ko Ma.	— (e)
W.B.Z.	Pyrsa.	Ko Pyrsa.	—
W.B.D.	"	"	—
y.B.	U Hep.	Ko Hep.	U Para. (f)
y.S.	Ka Hep.	Ko Hep.	Ka Para.
e.B.	U Bah.	Ko Bah.	U Hymmen.
e.S.	Ka Kong.	Ko Kong.	Ka Hymmen.

Relationship.	Kinship term.	Term of address.	Term of reference.
M.S.Z. (older)	Bah.	Ko Bah.	—
.S.Z. (younger)	Para.	Ko Hep.	—
M .S.D. (o).	Kong.	Ko Kong.	—
M .S.D. (y).	Para.	Ko Hep.	—
M B.Z. (o).	Bah Kha.	Ko Bah.	—
M.B.Z. (y).	"	Ko Hep.	—
M.B.D. (o).	"	Ko Kong.	—
M.B.D. (y).	"	Ko Hep.	—
F.S.Z. (o)	Bah Kha.	Ko Bah.	— (g)
F.S.Z. (y)	Bah Kha.	Ko Hep.	—
F.S.D. (o)	"	Ko Kong.	—
F.S.D. (y)	"	Ko Hep.	—
F.B.Z. (o).	Para Kha.	Ko Bah.	—
F.B.Z. (y)	"	Ko Hep.	—
F.B.D. (o).	"	Ko Kong.	—
F.B.D. (y).	"	Ko Hep.	—
W.	Ka Tnga.	Ka Kmie Ki Khun.	— (h)
H.	U Tnga.	U Kpa Ki Khun.	—
W.y.S.	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	—
W.e.S.	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	—
e.g.H. (w.s.).	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	—
y.S.H. (w.s.).	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	—
W.B.	Kynnum.	Ko Um.	— (q)
S.H. (m.s.).	Kynnum.	Ko Um.	—
W.y.B.W.	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	—
W.e.B.W.	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	—
H.e.S.H.	Hymmen Kynsi.	I Kong.	—
H.y.S.H.	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	—
W.y.S.H.	Shi Para Shong Kha.	Ko Hep.	Para Shong Kha.
W.e.S.H.	Shi Hymmen Shong Kha.	Ko Bah.	Hymmen Shong Kha.

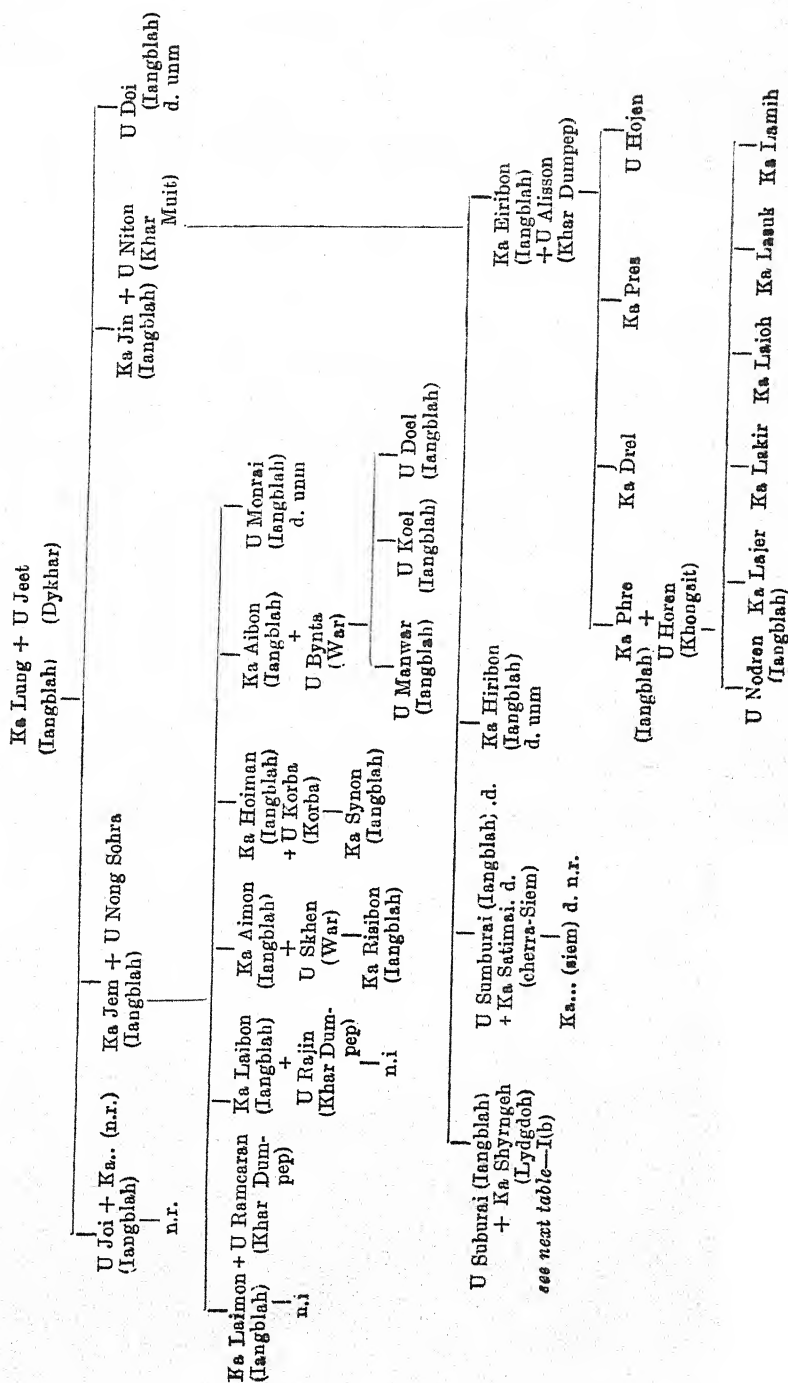
Relationship.	Kinship term.	Term of address.	Term of reference.
H.y.B.	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	--
e.B.W. (m.s.).	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	--
H.e.B.	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	--
y.B.W. (m.s.).	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	--
H.y.S.	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	--
e.B.W. (w.s.)	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	--
H.e.S.	Hymmen Kynsi.	Ko Kong.	--
y.B.W. (w.s.).	Para Kynsi.	Ko Hep.	--
H.y.B.W.	Ka Para Shong Kha.	Ko Hep.	--
H.e.B.W.	Ka Hymmen Shong Kha.	Ko Kong.	--
H.M.	Ka Kiaw.	Ko Kiaw.	Ka Kiaw Kurim. (b)
W.M.	"	"	"
H.F.	U Kthaw.	Ko Kthaw.	U Kthaw Kurim.
W.F.	"	"	"
Z.W.	Ka Pyrsa Kurim.	Ko Pyrsa.	Ka pyrsa Kurim. (f)
D.H.	U Pyrsa Kurim.	Ko Pyrsa.	U Pyrsa Kurim.
D.H.M.	Para Kmie Shong Kha.	Ko Hep. Ko Kong.	-- (f)
Z.W.M.	"	According to age.	--
D.H.F.	Para Kpa Shong Kha.	"	--
Z.W.F.	"	"	--
M.M.	Ka Meirad or Mei Hep.	Ko Meirad or Ko Mei Hep.	Ka Kmie Tymmen.
M.F.	U Parad or U Pa Hep.	Ko Parad or Ko Pa Hep.	U Pa Tymmen.
F.F.	U Parad or U Pa Hep.	Ko Parad or Ko Pa Hep.	U Pa Tymmen.
F.M.	Mei Kha.	Ko Mei Kha.	Ka Kmie Kha.
D.Z.	Khun Ksiew.	Ko Khun Ksiew.	--
D.D.	"	"	--
Z.Z.	"	"	--

Relationship.	Kinship term.	Term of address.	Term of reference.
Z.D.	"	"	—
M. 2nd H.	Pa Khynnah.	Ko Pa Khynnah.	—
W. 1st. H.C.	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—
M. 1st. H.	Pa San.	Ko Pa San.	—
W. 2nd H.C.	Khun Ruit.	Ko Khun Ruit.	—

- (a) Myntri U Subu Rai insisted on the form I Kpa and similar forms for certain relatives as noted. (Kpa—Pa).
- (b) The kinship term and term of reference was not distinguished by younger informants.
- (c) The kinship term and term of reference was not distinguished by younger informants. Two Christian informants gave the term Mama in place of Kni and Rangbah. It is the Bengali and Assamese term for the M.B.
- (d) No distinction was made by age.
- (e) No distinction by age. Younger informants said that "Kni" was also used in place of "Ma".
- (f) No difference according to sex of speaker. But some of the younger informants stated Hymmen to be the kinship term in place of Bah and Kong for e.B. and e.S. and also M.S.Z. and M.S.D. if older.
- (g) The older informants gave these terms. Young men and women failed to distinguish between kinship terms and those of address occasionally.
- (h) The husband and wife address each other as parents of the children.

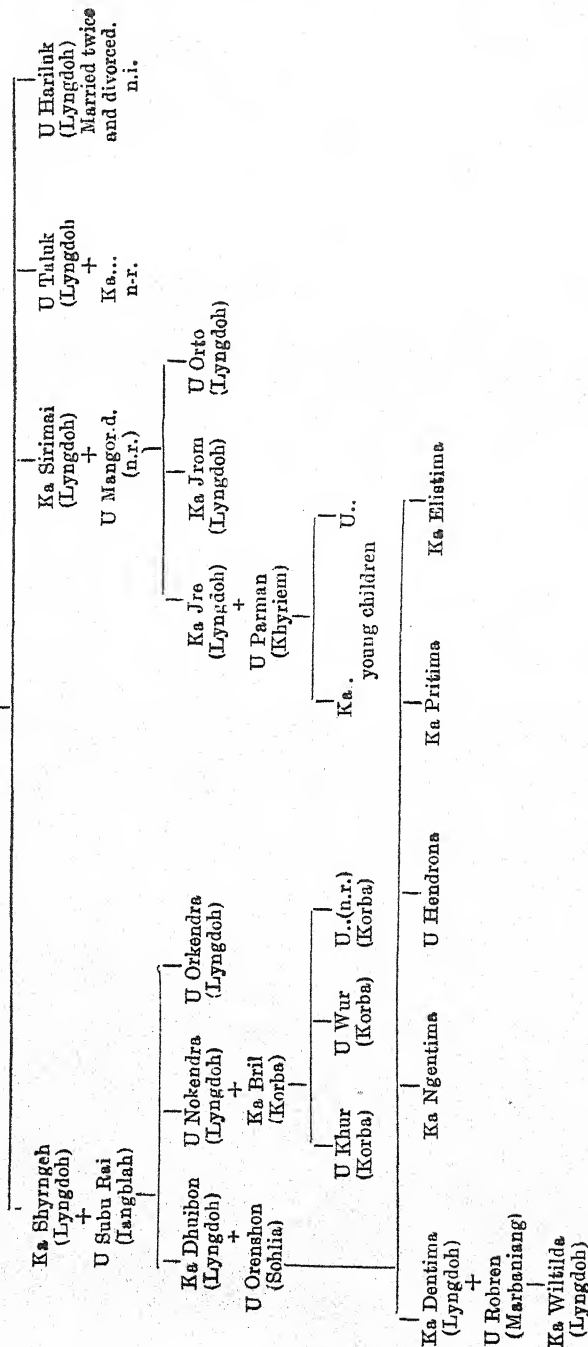


Genealogy I(a)



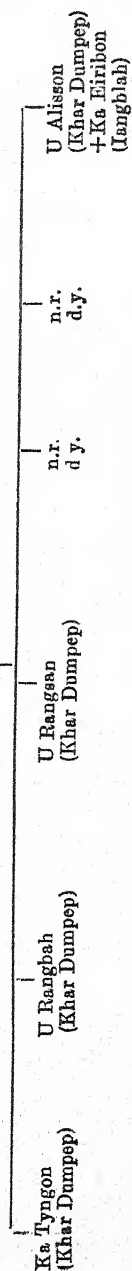
## Genealogy I(b)

Ka Durabon + U Thirkhah  
(Lyngdoh) (Korba)



## I(c)

Ka Aimon + U Morkin  
(Khar Dumpep) (Khar Soblia)  
[Mawphlang] [Mawphlang]



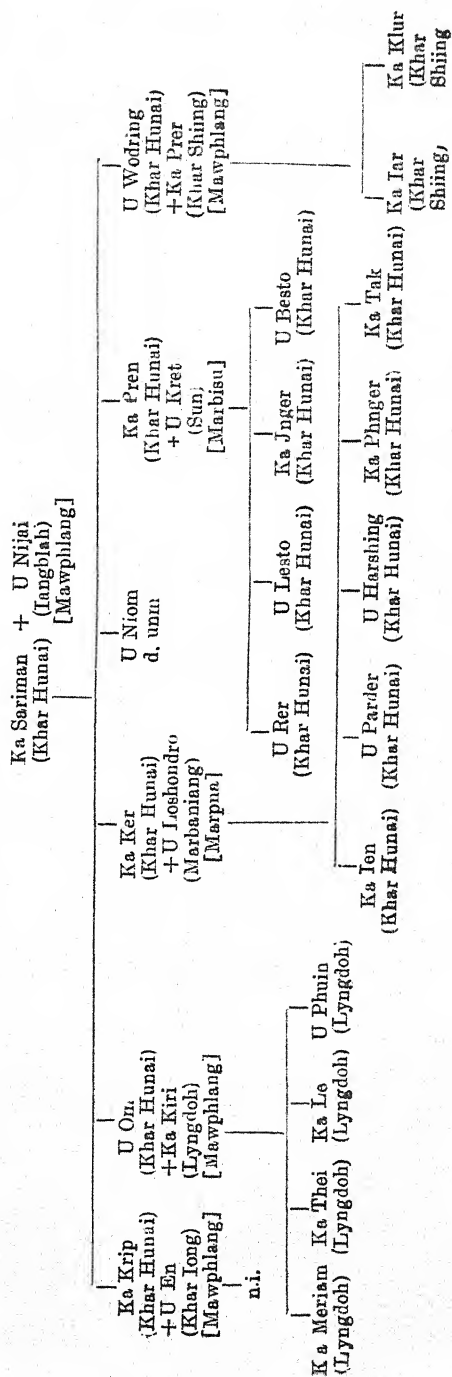
n.r.  
d.y.

n.r.  
d.y.

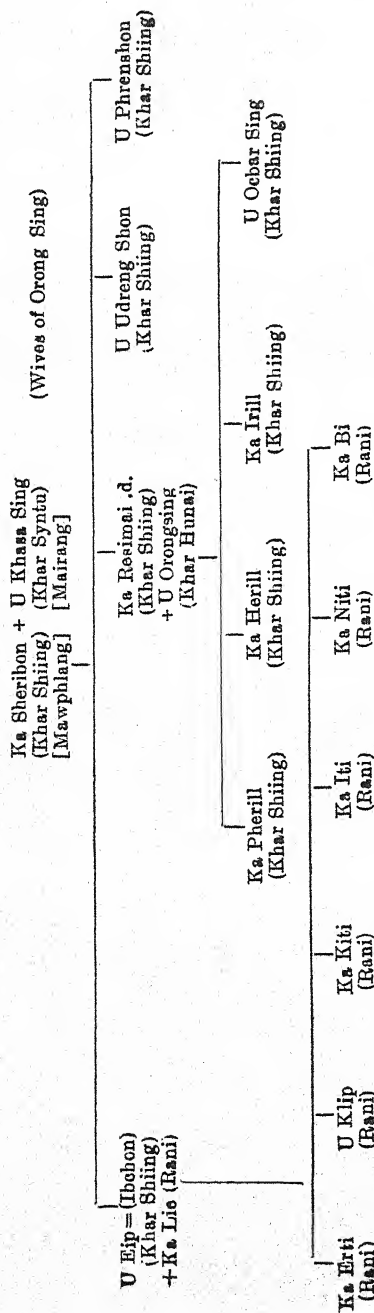
See table I(a) above



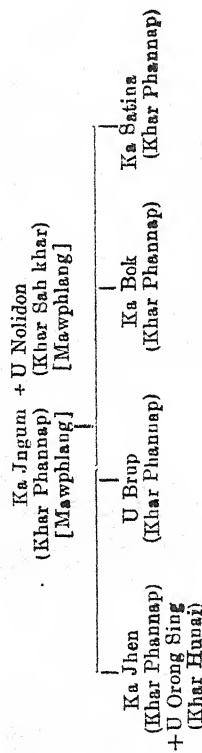
II(b)



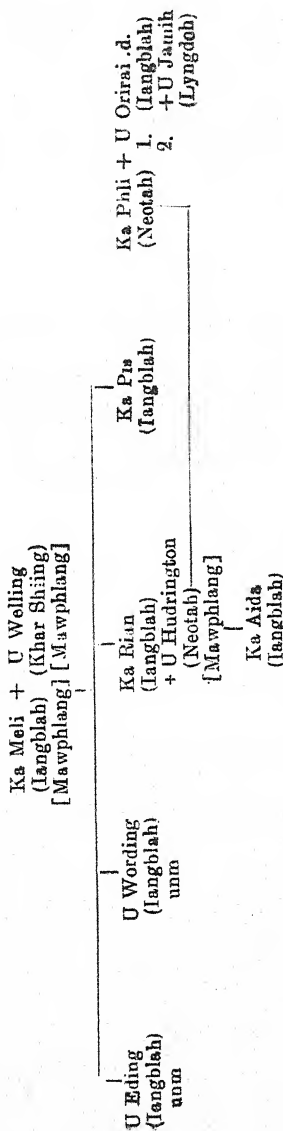
## II(c) (1.)



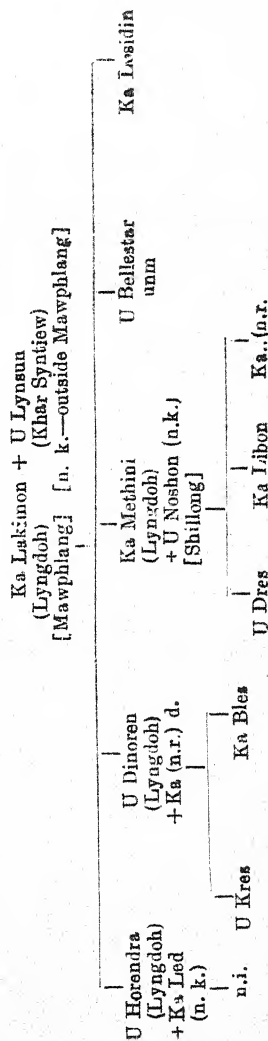
## II(c) (2)



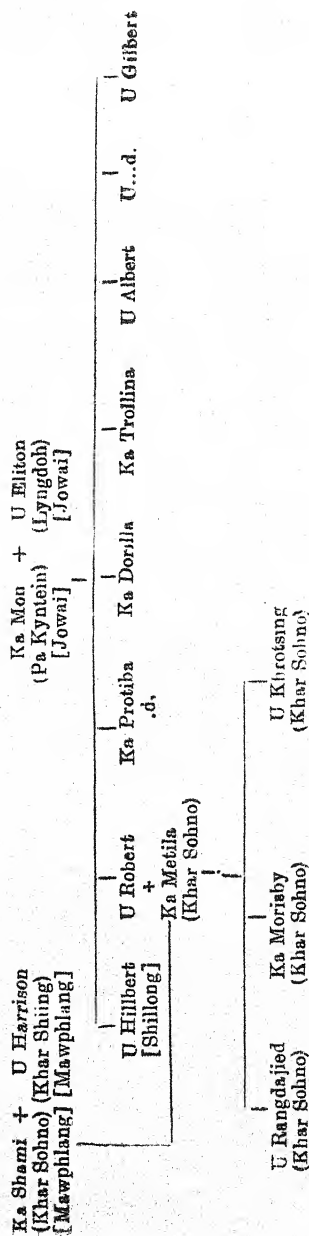
III



IV



## V





## CHAPTER II

Descent, among Khasis, is counted through the mother; residence is also matrilocal. A woman lives with her mother from her birth until some time after her marriage. After one or two children have been born her husband may build for his family a house on the village land, in the village of the wife; this house becomes her property. The ancestral house goes to the youngest daughter. In the absence of a daughter the next youngest sister's youngest daughter becomes the heiress. Rarely, a man will take his wife to his mother's village. This case will be considered later.

A man is born, in the house of the mother's mother, or if the parents have built a separate house, in the house of his mother. He continues to live there until his marriage, when he generally goes to live in the wife's mother's house, whether it is in the same village or a different village.

The myntri U Subu Rai married in the village of Mawphlang, where his mother also lived, and built the house, which is known as his house. It is, technically, the property of his wife Ka Shyrngeh and will be inherited by Ka Dhuibon, and thereafter, by Ka Elistima. The house of U Subu Rai's mother, Ka Jin has been inherited by Ka Eiribon, and will go in the next generation to Ka Pres. If the latter has no daughters, the property will go to Ka Drel and failing her heiress, to Ka Phre and then to Ka Lamih. If she has no issue, it will pass to her sister Ka Lasuk and so on to Ka Lajer. If Ka Lajer has no daughters, the property will go to Ka Jem's family to her youngest daughter Ka Aibon. As she has only sons, the next heiress will be Ka Synon, and if she predeceases Ka Aibon or has no daughters, the girl Ka Risibon will inherit next. If

she does not have any daughter, the property will pass to the female descendants of sisters of Ka Lung, as her elder sisters Ka Laimon and Ka Laibon have left no daughters. It is therefore necessary to distinguish carefully between an elder and a younger sister, and also similarly between sisters of the mother. The generation of the women of the same house and extended family requires to be noted with care.

The youngest daughter and heiress is termed the Ka Khadduh. As Cantlie remarks the "Ka Khadduh is the custodian of the family property, not the full heir in the sense known to other systems of law, but a limited heir. She is responsible for the performance of religious ceremonies.....; she cremates her mother, and if she be Ka Khadduh of the whole family, she puts the bones of all members in their final resting place under the stone (mawbah) of the clan. The expenses of this ceremony are considerable and for this reason she gets a larger share of property, or in some cases a piece of family property in addition and apart from her separate share. Members of the family who are unable to earn for themselves and have no children to earn for them have the right of being fed at the iing-Khadduh" (house of the heiress).

The management of the property is however vested in the men of the family. The ancestral property of the family of myntri U Subu Rai's mother was under the management of U Joi, in his mother's life-time; then, on the death U Joi, the next brother U Doi became manager. After U Doi, the management came to U Subu Rai. After him, the authority will pass to U Hojen, as U Sumburai is dead and then to U Nodren. Any sons of Ka Pres and other sisters will not get any precedence over U Nodren. As the senior U Kni of the Iangblah Kur, U Subu Rai is also the manager of the common property of the Kur. This land has been leased out to various persons and the total income is divided among the different houses of the Kur. Whenever there is money to be distributed U Subu Rai calls together all the representatives of the Iangblah houses and

divides equally. U Subu Rai explained that each house counted as a separate unit. Thus if Ka Jem, Ka Jin and all their daughters were alive, the married daughters who lived in a separate house, namely, Ka Laimon, Ka Laibon, Ka Aimon and Ka Hoiman of Ka Jem's house, and Ka Phre of Ka Jin's line, would each get a share. But Ka Jem and her Ka Khadduh Ka Aibon who lives in the mother's house would get only one share. So would Ka Jin, Ka Eiribon and the unmarried daughters of the latter. The descendants of Ka Lung would get seven equal shares for distribution to each house, and not two shares first, divided later into shares corresponding to the number of daughters for Ka Jem's and Ka Jin's house. The manager does not get any share of the collections. Authority in the management of the ancestral property therefore passes from one male to another, in the extended family, and the Kur, in a manner which necessitates a clear distinction of seniority and juniority of brothers, among themselves and also of sisters with regard to brothers.

The case of succession is similar. Gurdon notes that the Siemship in Myllem State passes from a man to his next brother, and "failing such brothers, by the eldest of his sisters' sons; failing such nephews by the eldest of the sons of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand nephews by the eldest of the sons of his mother's sisters" and so forth in the female line. In Nongkrem, the son or similar male relative of the High Priestess becomes by delegation a Siem. The office of the High Priestess passes from a woman to her eldest surviving daughter; and failing daughters to the eldest daughter of her eldest daughter; failing daughters of her eldest daughter, to the eldest daughter of her second daughter, and so on. This is the customary line of succession, and is stated by Gurdon to be "uniform in all cases" practically.

Neither levirate, nor sororate are practised by the Khashis. Widows are stated (G) quite often not to remarry if there are daughters. There is no question of the control of the property

of the woman by her husband. No occasion arises either of taking his place on death, by his brother or by sister's son ; or of a sister of a deceased wife being made over to a man, as is the custom among Garos, where the husband of the heiress manages the property of his wife. Among the Khasis, the widow or widower cannot normally remarry before the end of a year after the death of the husband or wife. When a year is over, a payment is made to the Kur of the deceased to remove the disability. If the man or woman want to remarry before the year is out, a larger sum is paid. In Mawphlang, a sum of Rs. 5-4-0 is paid at the end of the year and Rs. 11-4-0 for untimely remarriage (within the year). The payment is made to the Ka Khadduh of the deceased in each case, and a ceremony severing the relation with the dead spouse is performed. A pig is purchased with the money and it is sacrificed in the house of the Ka Khadduh by a man—usually a neighbour. If the deceased was a man, the following invocation is made : “Ha kane ka mied la shim nong sang bad knia nong sang ia phi. Ka tnga uta uta ban ia khuid.”

Free translation :—

“On this night the tabooed person is sacrificing to you. The wife of so-and-so (naming the man) is hereby made pure.”

The pig is then killed by thrusting an iron spike through the shoulder. It is then cooked and eaten by the people present. This mode of killing is known as “dung.”

The myntri Orongsing, whose genealogy has been noted, remarried a year after the death of his first wife Ka Resimai. This woman died two years ago, and the ceremony for removing the bar on remarriage was performed only last year. The money was made over to an old man U Ru, who is well acquainted with the rites. He purchased a pig and killed it by the “dung” method in the compound of Ka Resimai's mother, Ka Sheribon. The spike might be of wood or iron, stated U Ibchon. I was informed by the myntri U Subu Rai that the ceremony of

removal of the bar on remarriage was also of the same kind elsewhere in the neighbouring States. Clearly, the idea of leviration or sororation is incompatible with this idea of the marriage bond continuing even after death and necessitating a ceremony to break it. It may also be noted that while the Khasis permit divorce somewhat easily, remarriage is not permitted of either party "within the family of the divorced husband or wife" (G). A Khasi cannot also marry two sisters, although he can marry irregularly, more than one woman and also the wife's sister after the decease of the wife. We can now discuss why a woman or a man refers to the brothers and sisters of the husband or wife by the kinship terms used by the spouse, qualified by a special term. When a man marries and goes to live in the house of his wife's mother, he comes in contact with unmarried sisters of the wife. But he knows that they are sexually to be avoided. He lives in the wife's mother's house only during the life time of his wife. A wife's sister is comparable to a Kur sister sexually, during this period.

But his economic relations and religious ties require that a distinction should be made between these "sisters" and the "Kur sisters." The qualifying term supplies this requirement. The woman, on the other hand, has no direct relations with her husband's brothers. She has however to keep in touch with the husband's female relatives. The bones of the husband go over to the mother's house and eventually to the clan ossuary. The husband is also a potential manager of the property of his female relatives. She has therefore to take note of the order in age of her husband's sisters. As her husband uses the terms for sisters for the sisters-in-law, it is quite natural for her to extend such usage to her husband's sisters. The brothers of the husband do not count at all so far as the woman is concerned, and she will not therefore have any special term for them. As the sisters are referred to as Para Kynsi and Hymmen Kynsi, so will the brothers of the husband be referred to by similar terms. The absence of any sexual privileges between the woman and her

husband's brothers fits in with such a terminology of kinship. It has not however determined the terminology.

We have referred to an exception in the case of kinship terms used by a man. His relation with his wife's brothers is quite different from that of a woman with the husband's sisters. The wife's brother is the manager of the wife's ancestral property; also this uncle has to be associated with important rites at birth and death of the children of the sister. Nevertheless, the husband has also his own position. The house that he sets up after marriage belongs to his wife no doubt; but he is the master there. As Gurdon states "It is he who faces the dangers of the jungles and risks his life for wife and children. In his wife's clan he occupies a very high place, he is second to none but U Kni, the maternal uncle, while in his own family circle a father and a husband is nearer to his children and wife than U Kni. The Khasi saying is "U Kpa uba lah ban iai, U Kni Uba tang ba ka Iap ka im" which may be translated freely as "The father bears the heat and burden of the day, the maternal uncle only comes when it is a question of life or death."

A man and his wife's brother represent the two aspects of the relationship which binds every man in Khasi society to his mother's house and to his wife's house.

Clearly, the two men, the sister's husband and the wife's brother, each have rights which are similar. Also they have close contact in many matters. Their relationship to each other is however distinct from that of brothers. Among the latter, authority depends on seniority. Between the S.H and the W.B, such a question does not arise. Each is in a position of authority, but in a different sphere. A special term is obviously needed to denote this special relation, which is reciprocal.



### CHAPTER III

It is evident from the discussions in the previous chapter, that the children born in a house have to take note, as they grow up, of the seniority and juniority among the sisters of the mothers, and also of the brothers of the mother. They have however very little relation with the brothers of the father, and we have to explain why the latter are classed with the father. This point will be discussed later. Here we may note that the relative lack of importance of the father's sisters has resulted in her not receiving distinction by age in the table of Kinship terms ; it is however indicated in address. Similarly the wife of the mother's brother is also not distinguished by age.

It may however be questioned why such a distinction by age is extended to the husband of the mother's sister. As noted before, a Khasi does not set up a separate house until one or two children are born. The children who are born in the house of mother's mother, are looked after like mothers, not only by the progenitress but her sisters. While there would arise no question as to who is the actual mother, it would be normal for the children to call the mother and her sisters by the same term which would thus cover the women of that generation who live in that house. Each little child would find its mother's sister addressed as "mother" by its playmate and cousin. Hence he or she would also tend to extend the term to the mother's sister from the mother. Under such circumstances, the simplest mode of distinction would be to apply the term "mother" to the actual relation, and add qualifying adjectives for the sisters of the mother. The Khasis use for this purpose, quite appropriately, terms denoting seniority and juniority for reasons previously stated. Reciprocally, a woman uses the same terms for

her children and sister's children, using an additional term for the latter, to make the distinction clear. The mother's brother's wife, and the father's sister live elsewhere, and cannot therefore share the same kinship term with the mother. The husbands of the mother's sisters are comparable to the father, as these males are all outsiders who have married the women of the house. The actual father "U Kpa" is the husband of the actual mother "Ka Kmie" and is clearly distinguished. The others are the husbands of the "Kmie San" and "Kmie Nah." Hence they are given the labels of "Kpah San" and "Kpa Nah" or "Kpa Khyannah." They derive their kinship terms denoting "father" through their wives who are called mothers by the children—not through any sexual rights on the wife's sisters. Such sexual rights, as noted before, have no existence. Hodson is not justified in ascribing this identity of kinship terms to alleged marriage rules and sexual rights which were operative in a hypothetical earlier type of Khasi society.

The mother's brother is important to the Khasi child, and has a special name, Ma, with an adjective such as Rangbah to indicate his position among his brothers. His relation with his sister's children is different from that of the mother's sister's husbands. It is more or less formal and ceremonial. A similar relative, on the father's side of the family, is the father's sister, though her position is not so important. Nevertheless, the two relatives are comparable. The mother's brother is in charge of the management of the mother's ancestral property and helps in performing important social ceremonies for the group. The father's sister is the repository of the bones of the father's family; in her is vested the preservation of the family religious traditions. Both these relatives live in houses separate from those of the nephews and nieces concerned and are, in a sense, of other households. Each of them was born in the natal house of one of the parents. They are therefore clearly distinguished from the father, the mother, the sisters of the mother and their husbands. But a common term, allowing



for difference in sex, is applied to both. The corresponding uncle and aunt by marriage are referred to by terms which make this clear. The husband of the father's sister is a "Ma" like the mother's brother and is also referred to as "Kni." But as his position by age is unimportant, the adjective of position is lacking in his case. Similarly the mother's brother's wife and the father's sister have a common term "Nia"; but the latter has her relationship through the father clearly indicated by the additional term "Kha" which refers to kinship through a male. The mother's brother's wife is, on the contrary, an aunt by marriage. The husband of the father's sister derives his term through his wife; and the wife of the mother's brother, through her husband. The identities M.B. = F.S.H. and M.B.W. = F.S. are therefore derived indirectly and are not original. Hodson's hypothesis that they represent actual identity of kinship in an earlier dual society therefore turns out to be superfluous.

Reciprocally, a man refers to his sister's children by a term which is different from that for his own children. A woman also refers to her brother's children by this term which is different from that used for her own or her sister's children. As indicated, the M.B. as well as the F.S. are both on a parallel footing, and are practically labelled together, allowing for differences of sex.

We may say that there are, in Khasi society, two clearly recognised units. One of these is the house and household, where the men and women have been born. Inside this house group, the sisters have similar rights, actual as well as potential. As we have seen, on the death of one sister, where there is no female issue, another sister takes her place in continuing the traditional religious entity of the group. The brothers again, among themselves, take one another's place in succession, in the matter of authority, and of management of the family property. The other unit is that of the woman, her husband and the children. We may refer to it as the unit set up by marriage.

Referring to the first type, we may say that the second type results from the men of the house going out to marry women of other houses. As the men settle down in the wife's mother's house and later on set up a separate house on her land, the continuity of tradition in the house of birth is kept up by the women who remain behind.

It would however be a mistake to suppose that the bond between the members born in a house is severed on marriage. We have noted before that the bones of a dead man return eventually to his mother's house, for final deposition in the clan cinerary, or at least that of the extended household. The bond between the mother's brother and sister's children has also been noted as well as the authority exercised by the former over the extended family.

Further links between a man and his mother's Kur will appear from a study of the rules of inheritance and land tenure with regard to men. Any property that a man acquires before marriage belongs to his mother's house. Myntri U Subu Rai, for example, earned money before his marriage, and he purchased some land with this amount, in a village called Mawbeh. It will go to his sisters and their heiresses on his death. The earnings of a man after marriage, and after he has settled down in his wife's mother's house (or wife's house), among Khasis proper, generally go to the wife and daughters on death. But any gifts made by the parents at marriage have to be returned on death. Similarly, if a man has earned money after marriage, independently of his wife's capital, a part can be claimed on death by the man's mother's group.

Again, if a man returns to his mother's village after marriage, he can exercise his rights to cultivate the common land there. Every village community has its common land known as Ri Raid. As David Roy states (CN), "people can occupy a raid land where they build their houses and cultivate. For cultivation purposes land not more than can be cultivated is taken. The occupant can sell his house and the site and the garden of

his house or paddy field or grove ; but the sale does not extend to anything more than his right of occupancy.....Any site, garden or place of cultivation if abandoned, can be taken by another."

A son of a house of the village, of which the Kur is of the ancient settlers or has been given similar privileges, has the right of building a house, and of cultivating land in the Ri Raid. Reference has been made to the rare practice whereby a man brings his wife from her mother's house to his own village. In such a case he may set up a separate house on the community land, and cultivate some of it, to maintain his wife and children. The property will pass, on his death, to his daughters as usual. It will not go to his mother or sister.

(a) The man U Hariluk married twice, but did not settle down with his wife on either occasion. He built a house in Mawphlang which is his mother's ancestral village and brought each wife there. Both of them were divorced in turn and have left. If any of his wives had lived with him the house would have gone to his daughters. Now, however, the heiress is Ka Jrom, the daughter of a sister. [Genealogy I(b)].

(b) The woman Ka Lakimon is of the old Lyngdoh clan of Mawphlang. When U Lynsun married her, he set up a house in Mawphlang and cultivated land. But on his death, the woman went away to Shillong with her children, about 10-15 years ago, selling the house and abandoning the jhum land. The son U Bellestar has recently come to Mawphlang and is working in U Subu Rai's house. If he settles down, i.e., marries and wants to set up a house, he can do so on the Ri Raid. (Genealogy IV).

(c) The foundress of the Khar Dumpep clan was a woman of the village Dumpep, and of clan Khar Dohling. She had two other sisters. One of the three sisters went to Myllem, and another came to Mawphlang while the third remained at Dumpep as Ka Khadduh. The girl who went to Myllem founded the Khar Sohnoh Kur and the girl who came to Mawphlang founded

Khar Dumpep. These three clans—Khar Dohling, Khar Dumpep and Khar Sohnoh cannot intermarry on account of their common ancestry. U Alisson, the sister's husband of U Subu Rai is of Khar Dumpep clan and furnished me with the above details. He stated that his ancestress married a man of the old settler clans of Mawphlang and came to her husband's village. This man, being of the Khadar Kur, could build a house and cultivate land from the community holding. The property thus acquired passed to the daughters; and gradually the clan Khar Dumpep grew more numerous, and acquired rights in the Ri Raid like an old clan. [Genealogy I(c)].

(d) The family of the first wife of U Orongsing furnishes another illustration. The woman Ka Li came with her widowed mother from Cherra. The father had been a Synteng from Jowai. The girl has been married by U Ibchon, who is a member of one of the old settler clans. He has built a house for his family and made an excellent potato garden out of the common land for the maintenance of his wife and children. They will inherit it from him according to the usual Khasi mode. [Genealogy II(c)].

(e) U Roberts who is a Synteng of Jowai, and a Christian by religion (Genealogy V) came to Mawphlang in 1930-31 and after a couple of years married a non-Christian Khasi girl by Khasi rites thereby losing his membership of the church. He cultivated Ri Raid land when he stayed with his wife's mother Ka Shami [Genealogy V]. This woman is of Khar Sohnoh clan. One of her ancestresses, came to Mawphlang only a few generations ago, and married a man of the old clans. Her descendants have thereby obtained the privilege of cultivating Ri Raid. U Roberts has divorced his wife and no longer possesses this right. He now works as a tailor in the village, and lives with a friend near the bazaar.

(f) Gurdon has suggested that the large number of clans having Khar as the first part of the name of the Kur have originated from ancestresses who were carried off from the plains.

While the traditions regarding the origin of Khar Dumpep and Khar Sohnoh collected by me do not support the view that the ancestress came necessarily from the plains, it is clear that they support Gurdon's hypothesis that those clans are derived from ancestresses who came from or settled in certain villages. It is evident that Gurdon's hypothesis implies that the husbands of these women, who brought them home from elsewhere, could clear land and transmit such property to their daughters, although the mother of the daughters did not own any land locally. This right to clear the Ri Raid is therefore not a recent innovation.

I have noted these details here as this aspect of inheritance from males has not been clarified elsewhere. It is not meant of course that this right to clear land extended to the special clan lands or family property matrilineal of the man. As noted before the Kni manages such land and makes over the income or produce to the women who are the owners. Even in such land, however, a man has some rights. Both Gurdon and Cantlie state that a male can adopt a blood relative of the same Kur if all the female members of the particular stock are dead. He himself holds the property for life only, when the women of the line are dead. On adopting a girl of the Kur, she becomes the keeper of the property and also his successor. But "the profits of his labours in the landed property can be used for his wife and children." The inherent right of the male is brought out to a certain extent in this rule also. Such private lands are known as Ri Kynti. It may be of the family or the clan. As an example of family land may be noted the case of the forest of U Nong Sohra, the husband of Ka Jem [Genealogy I(a)]. He cleared some Ri Raid land and planted pine trees there. Only the descendants of Ka Jem can cut trees in this forest which is now practically private property of this group. But the land is essentially Ri Raid in this sense that it cannot be alienated and when all trees have been cut away, any villager will be entitled to occupy it. The Khar Shiing Kur as a whole has true private lands near the village. If people of other clans want to cultivate

it, they have to arrange with the U Kni, who is in this case U Babu of Mawphlang, elder brother of the Myntri, U Mama who represents this clan on the State organisation. Payment is made in money which is distributed to the different houses of the Kur. There is, however, Ri Kynti land of another kind, individual property which can be sold absolutely. It may be noted here that no rent is paid to the State or the British Government for the Ri Raid, Ri Kynti or other lands in Mawphlang, or in general in other Khasi States. The revenue of the State is derived from tolls levied on commodities sold in market places and also from fines and other minor sources.

The fundamental social and economic unit among Khasis is therefore the family house and the extended family associated with it; the Kur represents a later stage in its expansion. Marriage sets up new relations but does not disturb this basic structure of Khasi Society.



## CHAPTER IV

The Khasi marriage prohibitions may now be discussed in some detail. The rules regarding levirate and sororate have already been noted. The Khasi is also exogamous with regard to his Kur. This bar extends to clans derived from the same ancestry. A Khasi cannot also marry his father's brother's daughter, or his father's father's brother's daughter. He cannot marry his mother's brother's daughter so long as this uncle is alive but may do so after the death of this relative. He cannot also marry his father's sister's daughter so long as the father is alive but may marry her after the death of his father. Gurdon remarks that even then "such unions are looked upon with disfavour by Khasis. In the War country, such marriages are totally prohibited."

It has been noted in the previous chapter, that the basic unit of Khasi society is the house where the children are born and where the women stay all their lives and with which the men also are connected intimately even when they go elsewhere on marriage. It has also been observed that the authority is vested entirely in the men. The women have various rights not found in many patrilocal groups; but it would be a mistake to underestimate the position of the men in the house. The father is the head of his small family—the simple family consisting of himself, his wife and the children. He is also the person in authority over his sisters' households in matters affecting the extended family as opposed to the simple family. Although his own children, and the children born in his natal house are distinguished on account of their social and economic differentiation, nevertheless, they are, to a certain extent, both like children to

him. His own brothers again, are to him his successors in the permanent rights, which are linked with the house of birth. Their bones all return to the common ossuary of the natal house. Apparently, this close association of the brothers with the house of birth is responsible for the rule that children of brothers cannot marry. If we formulate the prohibitions from the standpoint of the women, we can get a clear idea of their significance.

A Khasi woman cannot marry her father's brother's son ; nor even the son of this cousin. Again, a Khasi woman cannot marry her father's sister's son during the life-time of her father ; but may do so after his death. As we know, the father's death and return of the bones severs the link of the children and their mother with the father's house of birth. The women who safeguard and maintain the Khasi religious traditions, will thereafter raise no objection to the marriage of a woman of their house with the father's sister's son, who is now no longer closely related and is a man of another house merely. But the case is different with the other cross-cousin. A woman cannot marry her mother's brother's son, even after the death of that uncle, without incurring odium. In the War country, such a marriage is not permissible even after the uncle's death. We know that the relation with the mother's brother is not severed either at marriage or at death. The links are maintained even after death. His bones come back and rest in the ossuary of the house and the clan of his women relatives. The decease of this uncle does not therefore place his son in the category of a person with whom the formerly existing bond has been broken. We may sum up the distinction as follows :—

In the case of the father's sister's son, the death of the father breaks the link between a woman and her cousin in the other house, as neither of the parents of that male cousin were born in the house or extended family of the woman. In the case of the mother's brother's son, the father of that cousin is of the woman's own house and one with whom the bond endures even



after death. In the first case the bones of the male cousin's parent will not rest in the ossuary of the girl's house. In the second case, the bones of one parent of the male cousin will rest there.

The restrictions on cross-cousin marriage, and the difference in the two cases, bring out the importance of the house of birth and of the women who preserve the continuity of the Khasi religious traditions in this house. From the women's standpoint, the bar on intermarriage of children of sisters is absolute. Their bones will rest in the same ossuary after death in every case. The limitations on marriage of cross-cousins, who are of different households are less strict, the degree depending on the closeness of the link with the house of birth of the woman concerned.

The prohibition of marriage of parallel cousins born of two brothers is based on a similar reason. Stress is laid by men on the unity of brothers, just as the women stress the unity of sisters. The rights in property and common or practically common residence, and the custodianship of the 'religion' unite the latter. The authority and other rights already noted, unite the brothers in similar fashion. They also are in a sense guardians of the 'religion.' It is true that they marry in different households; but the bond that links them together and with the natal house is not broken thereby. We have seen that they retain the links and rights during life. Also, on death, they all return to the house of birth, in the repository of bones, and eventually are united with all men born in their house and the houses that have preceded it, in the same Kur. (This unity of the men and separation from the women is observed in the placing of the bones for the two sexes at every stage of the bone disposal rites.) Their children will therefore be linked always to this house through the bones of their fathers.

The recognition of the permanent bond linking the members of the natal house is, therefore, here also the important factor in prohibiting intermarriage between their children.

Hodson has suggested that the prohibition of marriage of parallel cousins was the result of an earlier dual stage of Khasi

society. He states "In a dual society the children of two brothers are necessarily so closely related as to be unable to marry. This prohibition takes us straight to the dual days. It survives—because—if it does not directly promote—it does not impede the great social necessity which arises when a multiple society develops from a dual society, the necessity of giving wives to and getting wives from the new groups. The children of two brothers are called para Kha because they are kins on the male side."

The prohibition of marriage of a woman with the father's brother's son's son is ascribed to the necessity of prohibiting "a marriage which maintained and was maintained by the dual system." Hodson explains that under dual organisation and matrilineal descent a man's F.F.B.D. would be of the opposite moiety and married to a man classed as mother's brother. Among Garos a man married his mother's brother's widow and also her daughter under the nokrom system for control of property.<sup>6,7</sup> "Khasi custom definitely forbids a marriage which is the pivot of the Garo system which rests on the maintenance of the dual interest in the estate. This dual control would obviously be difficult to maintain against the pressure of competing groups which results from the development from a dual basis to a multiple basis." The rules regarding cross-cousin marriage are also ascribed by him to the break-up of the dual system. Hodson did not consider it necessary to distinguish the actual cross-cousin and mother's brother and father's sister from the classificatory kin of that status. He states that the distinction between the two kinds of cross-cousin marriage could not be drawn until "the dual system had ceased to operate, since so long as it flourished, the wife of the mother's brother would be the father's sister." His explanation of the prohibitions is that they "facilitate, may be intended to facilitate and may survive because they facilitate marriages with men of clans other than those of the two, to which the parents belong." Hodson fails to realise that there is no evidence of preferential mating of cross-cousins in the past,

among Khasis. Even the Garos whom he cites apparently as representing a type of social organisation which the Khasis had earlier, do not encourage marriage with the father's sister's daughter. There is also no evidence that a Khasi ever married his mother's brother's widow. As I have shown earlier, the marriage prohibitions regarding cross-cousins can be explained on the basis of existing social and economic forces in Khasi society. The rule regarding exclusion of the F.B.Z.Z merely states that a woman cannot marry the son of her para Kha. It is not a new prohibition.

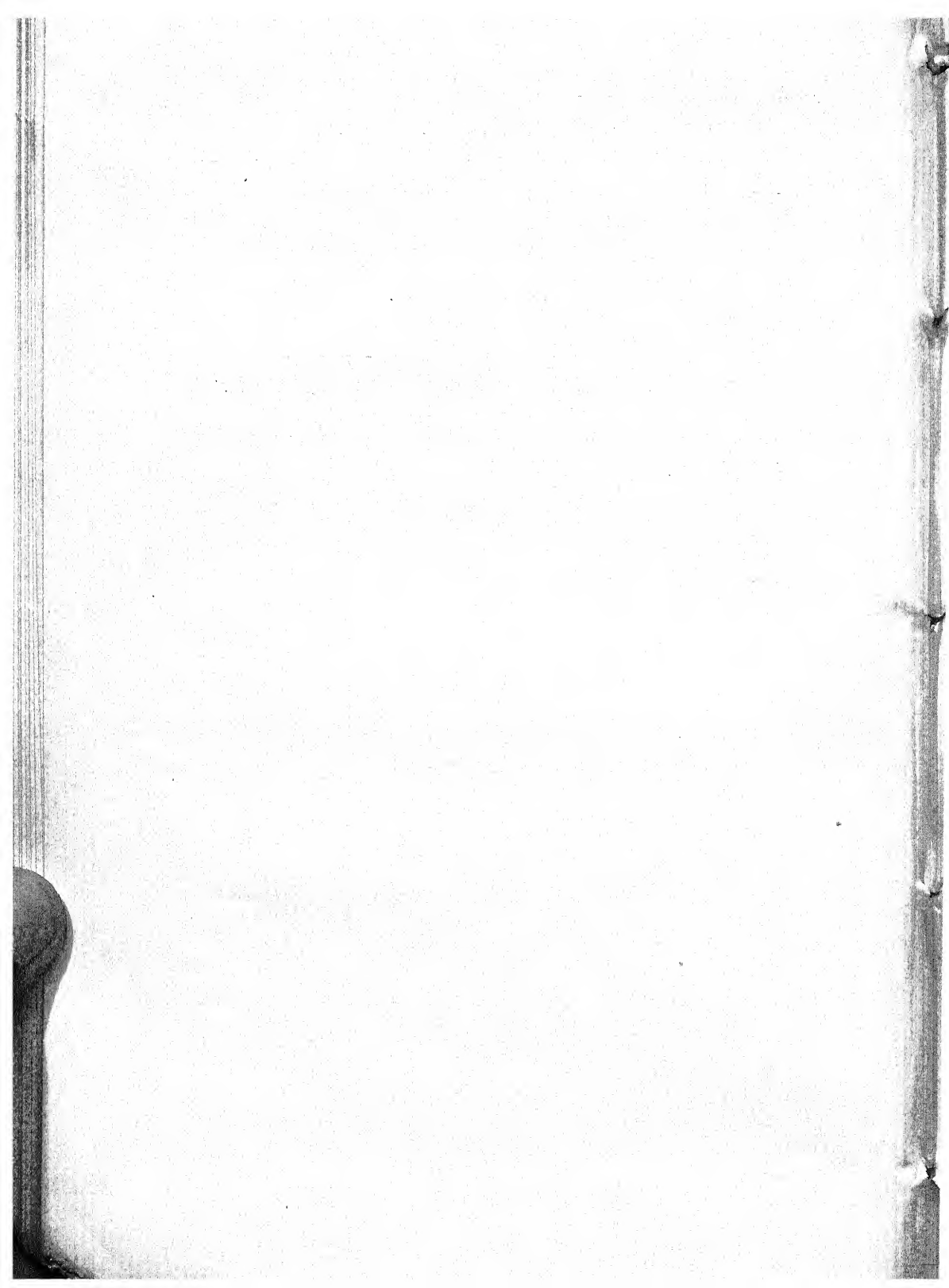
We may now state the reasons why a Khasi calls his father's brothers by the same term as father, and the wives of these uncles, as mother, using of course a qualifying term for seniority and juniority. As noted before, a Khasi boy or girl calls his mother's sister's children brothers and sisters. He avoids them strictly in marriage. They are not like cross-cousins, marriageable under certain circumstances. Any sexual approach towards them would have led in the old days to exile and also excommunication. The children of the father's brother are similarly excluded from the category of marriageable persons. They are like brothers and sisters, and as such are addressed as Bah, Hep and Kong. They are referred to as Para Kha. As Hodson observes, the term Para conveys, when used as a prefix, the idea of having common rights or status. It also means, when used by itself, a younger brother or sister. The term Kha refers to relation (by birth) through a male. It is used for example in the combination Bah Kha, which denotes both varieties of cross-cousins, the children of the mother's brother, as well as the father's sister. A Khasi man (and) woman has already another set of parallel cousins who are sexually tabooed. Their parents are given terms denoting the father and mother, with certain modifications. As the children of the father's brothers are also sexually tabooed, it would be natural to extend to them the terms used for the parents of the other group of non-marriageable cousins.

The close connection between the social structure of the Khasis and their kinship terms, is evidenced also in the case of the other relatives, by marriage. For a woman, the husband of the daughter is a son of another household, and is referred to by the term *Pyrsa*, used for persons of the generation below the speaker when they are of another house-unit. Her husband also follows the same rule. The son-in-law is not the son of one who is the potential successor of the speaker, in the natal house. But a distinction is necessary between the *Pyrsa* who is a nephew, and the son-in-law. This is furnished by the qualifying term *Kurim*. For the same reasons, the son's wife also gets the kinship term *Pyrsa Kurim*. We may expect that the reciprocal kinship terms, for the mother-in-law at least, looking at the matter from the house-unit view, will be denoted by a general term of this type. This general term ought to be applicable, with qualifications, to the reciprocal woman relative of the children who are termed *Pyrsa*, *i.e.*, to the father's sister and mother's brother's wife. But the terms ordinarily used stress the relationship between the houses of these nephews and nieces and their aunts noted above. The terms *Knia* or *Nia*, and *Kha* have come from the relationship between the houses. This aspect of these terms has been discussed in an earlier chapter. Obviously an expression like *Knia Kurim* would not emphasise the fact that the mother-in-law was a woman of another household. The term *Syngken* is however used to denote the mother's brother's wife alternatively, and we find that the term *Syngken Kurim* is also used for a mother-in-law. Although the father's sister and the mother's brother's wife have certain common aspects, we note that only a woman related by marriage with a male relative of the previous generation is referred to by the term *Syngken*. Thus the wife of the father's brother is occasionally referred to as *Syngken*, apparently when she is not being thought of as the mother of a *para Kha*. The father's sister is naturally not termed *Syngken*. The usage is therefore comparable to the employment of the terms *Pyrsa* and

Pyrsa Kurim, for the reciprocal relations. Normally, however, the mother-in-law is referred to by a separate special term which does not stress this aspect of the relation between the two persons.

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# A POSSIBLE RELIC OF MATRILocal RESIDENCE AMONG THE OLD KUKI TRIBES OF MANIPUR (ASSAM)

By

TARAK CHANDRA DAS

On the eastern border of India, in Assam, a large number of Tibteo-Burman-speaking tribes inhabit the forest-clad hills which roughly lie north-south and connect the eastern spurs of the Himalayas with the Bay of Bengal. These tribes extend towards the east up to Burma and Arracan and to the west up to the Garo Hills. They are divided on linguistic basis into different groups one of which is the Kuki-Chin group which occupies roughly the Lushai Hills District, part of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Hill Tippera, Cachar and the Chin Hills. The various Kuki tribes included in this division have again been sub-divided into two broad classes, *viz.*, the Old Kukis and the New Kukis. The New Kukis, better known as Thadous, occupy mainly the hills surrounding the Imphal Valley in Manipur. The Old Kuki tribes also occupy approximately the same area and were perhaps the first to move towards Manipur from their former home in the hills between the Tyao and Manipur Rivers. They comprise at least ten small tribes, namely, the Aimol, Anal, Chawte, Chiru, Kolhen, Kom, Lamgang, Purum, Tikhup and Vaiphei—all of which are now settled within the State of Manipur. These tribes show a number of common traits indicating close cultural, and possibly, ethnic relationship, though they do not intermarry. All the Old Kuki tribes practise migratory hoe-cultivation on the slopes of their native hills which is the main source of their food-supply. At present, an insignificant section of them has adopted plough-cultivation in the plains, mostly in imitation of the Meitheis of the plains. Hunting

and fishing may be found here and there, not as means of livelihood, but as sports. They have a few domestic animals of which the pig and the domestic fowl are the most important ones. Cows and buffaloes appear to have been recently introduced though the mithun is of comparatively older date. The more ancient domestic animals supply them with meat in individual and communal feasts and festivals but their more important use is as sacrificial animals to the deities and spirits who guide and control human destiny in this world. Milk or any of its products is not used by them generally; so the cows and buffaloes are possessed by those few families which have fields in the plains. Nowadays, however, milk is slowly coming into use though there is no market for it nor are the animals reared only for this purpose. The religious beliefs and practices of these Old Kuki tribes concentrate round a Supreme Deity—Pathien—and a host of spirits mostly presiding over different diseases and natural objects and phenomena. Animal sacrifice is the most common method of worship. Each of these tribes is divided into a number of exogamous, eponymous clans. At least among three of these tribes, namely, Chiru, Purum and Chawte, there is restricted exogamy of the tripartite type while the Aimols, Anals, Lamgangs and Kolhen have dual grouping or its relics; the rest practise free exogamy.

The above account is a skeleton-picture of the culture of the Old Kuki tribes of Manipur. Among a number of these tribes, *e.g.*, the Chirus, Purums, Koms, and Kolhens, we find the interesting custom which entitles the daughter's husband to take the most prominent part in all the socio-religious rites and festivities of his wife's father's house. Let us take a typical case—that among the Chirus. Among them, the husbands of the daughters of the family irrespective of their generation, are known as *mākshās*. The best type of *mākshā* for a man is his daughter's husband. Next, in order, are the sister's husband, father's sister's husband, the grandfather's sister's husband and so on upwards. When a man has no such



relative living, his place is taken by the husband of a woman of the clan. In any case and under all circumstances, a man must procure a *mākshā*; he cannot do without one. There are generally two *mākshās* for each family—the husband of the eldest daughter is the chief or senior *mākshā* while that of the next daughter is his assistant. The chief *mākshā* is socially regarded as the representative of the house-father and he is responsible for all the merits and demerits of the functions performed under his guidance and control at the house of his father-in-law. People invited on such occasions will praise him for efficiency and good management or blame him for the defects. They will never level any criticism against the householder himself. The latter, generally, on such occasions, moves about in a care-free fashion among his guests, occasionally enlivening himself with *zu* (rice-beer), the national drink, and talking about with the assembled guests. He has no duty towards them and does not concern himself in any way except providing the cost of the function. Such is the anomalous position of the *mākshā* among the Chirus; he acts as the master of the house where he has practically no legal position.

The duties of the *mākshā* are numerous and of varied types. His services are necessary on all important socio-religious occasions. Thus, he must be present in the house of his father-in-law on all occasions of marriage and funeral within the family. In case of illness too, when sacrifices are to be made to the different deities, his services are necessary. In course of religious rites and ceremonies such as the worship of Phaurungbā, performed by individual householders, the *mākshā* must be present to play his part. The day on which the marriage rites are performed among the Chirus, the two *mākshās* go with *zu* (rice-beer) to the house of the bride's father for the ceremony. If the bridegroom is not accompanied by even one *mākshā* the bride's people take note of it and at once realise a fine of a jar of *zu* (rice-beer). On this day the *mākshās* distribute *zu*

(rice-beer) to the assembled guests of the house. Their duties are more onerous on occasions of death. They carry the dead body to the burial ground, dig the burial pit, and fill up the grave with earth. For all these troubles they are given a turban each, by the deceased's family. Such is the nature of the functions of the *mākshā* among the Chirus.

The Purums, another Old Kuki tribe, living on the eastern bank of Lake Logtak, also show many of the traits described above. When a man constructs a new house, the *mākshā* prepares the requisite quantity of *zu* (rice-beer), of course at the expense of the builder, and keeps in the centre of the house to offer it to Nungchugba—one of their deities. This is followed by the ceremonial kindling of fire for the first time in the newly constructed house and this duty falls on the *mākshā*. Formerly they produced fire on this occasion by the sawing method and never brought it from another man's house but nowadays safety match is used. Each Purum village has a number of officers who look after the public affairs of the village. At the installation ceremony of each of these officers a feast is given to the villagers by the officer concerned. The magnitude of the feast, of course, depends on the importance of the office and the purse of the particular officer. At the feast given by a *khullākpa* (village headman) the *mākshās* kill the pigs, cook the meat and prepare *zu* (rice-beer). Their wives, collectively known as *ningans*, bring fuel, cook rice and help in preparing *zu* (rice-beer). It is the duty of the Purum village officers (*foumnāibās*) to worship Sābuhong, the deity concerned with the paddy crop, in the month of Mera, on a particular day previously settled. Though the worship is performed for the benefit of all the villagers, it is held only in the houses of the officers as private concerns. So, on this occasion too, the *mākshā* of the officer comes to his house and prepares *zu* (rice-beer) and distributes it among the invited villagers. Wealthy men among the Purums perform the Thien-hong-bā *genna* in order to attain social rank. A big feast is given and a mithun is sacrificed. The *mākshā* of the man kills the

mithun and takes a prominent part in the proceedings of the ceremony. The *mākshās* and the *ningans* have definite functions too in connection with the first hair-cutting ceremony of boys and girls. Marriage by service is the rule among the Purums and at the end of the service-period, when a man wants to bring back his son and daughter-in-law to his house, he asks his *mākshās* to come to his house. They with their wives, the *ningans*, forthwith repair to his house and prepare *zu* (rice-beer) and a curry called *shinsu* with pork. The *mākshās* and the *ningans* then start for the house of the bride's father carrying *shinsu* and three pots of *zu* (rice-beer) respectively. No other person is allowed to accompany them on this occasion. This curry and *zu* (rice-beer) are consumed only by the parents of the girl and her father's male siblings while it is tabooed to the girl herself and other female members of her father's sib. It is also tabooed to the boy and his siblings. At the end of this feast the bride goes to her husband's father's house in company of the *mākshās* and *ningans* who come to take her. Her husband remains for five days more in his father-in-law's house. In case of a death within the family the *mākshās* virtually perform all the functions connected with the disposal of the body. They wash the body ; four of them carry it on their shoulders to the burial ground ; they dig the grave and place the body within it and cover it up. On their return a feast is given the rice-beer and meat-curry for which had been prepared by the *mākshās* before they departed with the dead body. Thus the *mākshās* carry out all the duties in connection with the disposal of a dead body—the other relatives, friends and neighbours are mere on-lookers at this function among the Purums.

Similar traits may also be traced among other Old Kuki tribes such as the Koms and Kolhens (otherwise known as Koireng). Among the former the *mākshā* is one's daughter's husband and sister's husband. Among the latter *mākcās* (same as *mākshās*) are husbands of daughters, sisters, father's sisters, grandfather's sisters and so on upwards. The father's

sister's husband is among them the *mākshā par excellence*—the husband of the father's eldest sister being the chief *mākshā*. In both these tribes the duty of the *mākshā* is to prepare *zu* (rice-beer), cook meat and distribute both among the guests. He also acts as the representative of the householder on all occasions of feasts and festivities in the house and is responsible for all praises or blames. His duties are almost similar in connection with funerals. Among the Kabuis, a Naga tribe of Manipur, each family has two *mākshās* who are called *loogan* among them. They perform all the functions which are attributed to the *mākshās* among the Chirus with only one exception. Among the Kabuis the *loogan* is not the representative of the householder in the rites and ceremonies—this duty being relegated to two other persons who are known as *cānāunā*.

From the facts mentioned above it is clear that among a number of Old Kuki tribes the following culture-traits stand out clear :

- (a) The husbands of the daughters of a family have a common appellation, *viz.*, *mākshā*, irrespective of their generation-levels, which may be used by any person of the family. Their wives also have a common appellation, *viz.*, *ningan*. It may be mentioned here that each of the relatives included under either of these terms has a separate term of relationship by which he or she is referred to or addressed when individually considered.
- (b) Whenever any function of socio-religious importance is performed in a house the *mākshā* of the house-father must come to the house and take complete charge of it and discharge his duties to the entire satisfaction of all the persons concerned. He is usually helped in the discharge of his duties by his wife who also accompanies him on such occasions.
- (c) On all such occasions the *mākshā* is treated by the society as if he is the master of the house—whereas the real master assumes a minor rôle.

The Old Kuki tribes now trace their descent from father to children and practise patrilineal residence. Each of them is divided into a number of exogamous clans of eponymous character. Some of these tribes, *e.g.*, the Aimol, Anal and Lamgang, have definite dual organisation (J. K. Bose—Dual Organisation in Assam, *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Calcutta University, Vol. XXV, 1934) while the Kolhens, according to Shakespeare, have traces of it; others have tripartite divisions, *e.g.*, the Chirus, Chawtes and Purums; still others allow free exogamy among the different clans, *e.g.*, Koms. Such is the social organisation of the tribes under consideration. Now, in the midst of this patrilineal, patrilineal and patrilineal society the *mākshā* with his functions as detailed in (b) and (c) appears out of place. What possible reasons would endow him with these functions in the house of his father-in-law where his wife's brother is the natural assistant and successor to the house-father? The present constitution of the family and the household, and the socio-psychological behaviour which subsists between a man and his wife's family do not explain this peculiar position of the *mākshā*. So, we are forced to take recourse to historical reconstruction in order to explain the functions and position of the *mākshā*.

The functions which Old Kuki society now attributes to the *mākshā* essentially pertain to a society which practises matrilineal residence as the normal type of residence. Under this condition a man goes over to the house of his wife's parents after marriage and becomes a member of that household. He generally joins in all the economic efforts of the household to maintain itself and takes part in the social and religious functions of it too. Gradually with the departure of his wife's brothers by marriage, he assumes the reins of the household and manages it under the general guidance of his parents-in-law.<sup>1</sup> When the latter grow old and incapable he maintains them and steps into the place vacated by the father-in-law in the socio-religious sphere of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Khasi custom.

group. He is primarily responsible for the last rites of his parents-in-law as he is to enjoy all the property left by them and as by that time his wife's brothers have perhaps all left the household after marriage. He takes a prominent part at the marriage of his wife's brothers as he has to discharge this duty during the old age of his parents-in-law and more so after their demise. Similarly he acts as the master of the house on all occasions of social feasts and festivities and religious rites and ceremonies. This, of course, went on from generation to generation with the result that these functions came to be indissolubly associated with the son-in-law. Now, under these circumstances, when matrilocal residence was abolished and its place was taken by patrilocal residence, the constitution of the household changed. Instead of being composed of a man, his wife, his son-in-law, his daughter and their children and temporarily his sons, it came to be constituted of himself, his wife, his son and son's wife and their children. The daughter with her husband and their children had no place in this household. The son-in-law thus becomes dissociated from the father-in-law and is released from the duty of maintaining him and at the same time deprived of the property of his father-in-law which he used to enjoy under matrilocal residence. But his position in relation to socio-religious duties is not so easily changed. It had roots deeper in the magico-religious beliefs of the people and so he is allowed or rather required nowadays to act as the master of the house of his wife's father when social and religious rites and ceremonies are performed therein inspite of the change in the constitution of the household.

From a consideration of the facts stated above it appears that the *mākshā* of a man was his son-in-law at the first or initial stage; and this is borne out by the evidences from the Chirus among whom the daughter's husband is the *mākshā par excellence* at present. But, nowadays, we find that the term includes the sister's husband, father's sister's husband, grandfather's sister's husband and so on upwards, *i.e.*, the husbands

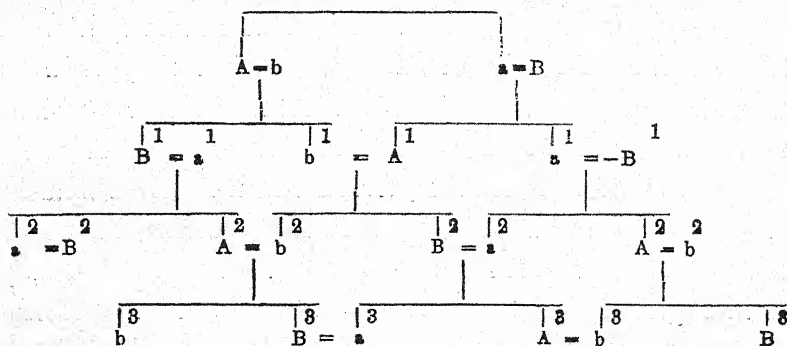


of the daughters of the family of whatsoever generation. This, however, is not warranted by simple matrilocal residence and we are forced to reconstruct certain other conditions in order to include these persons. Let us take the case of the sister's husband first. It may be mentioned here that he is not regarded as the best type of *mākshā* by any one of the tribes investigated. The duties entrusted to the daughter's husband in simple matrilocal communities might be taken up by the sister's husband when in addition to matrilocal residence two other conditions prevail, namely, (a) matrilineal descent and (b) cross-cousin marriage. Under these two conditions the sister's husband of a man is also his wife's brother. If descent be matrilineal then the wife's brother of a man is the nearest relative of his children (see Table I) and naturally he (the wife's brother) will take the leading part in all the socio-religious ceremonies of the house of his sister of which he is the natural guardian—the husband of the sister plays an unimportant part in such functions.

The father's sister's husband is also included in the list of *mākshās* and among the Kolhen he is the *mākshā par excellence*. In his case matrilocal residence with cross-cousin marriage of both the types explain the functions attributed to him. In a society with cross-cousin marriage of both the types a man's father's sister's husband is also his wife's father (see Table I) and mother's brother. So, with matrilocal residence, he goes to live with his wife's father, *i.e.*, his father's sister's husband; thus the latter, as head of the household, performs all the functions of his own house which is also the house of his daughter and through her, of her husband. Moreover, if the society be matrilineal, then as mother's brother of his daughter's husband, he has all the more reason to exercise the functions associated with the *mākshā*. Under the same conditions the father's father's sister's husband is also the husband of the wife's mother's mother and is thus entitled to exercise the functions of the *mākshā*.

From the above-noted facts it appears that if in a particular society we find that the duties attributed to the *mākshā* among some of the Old Kuki tribes are associated with the daughter's husband, sister's husband, father's sister's husband, father's father's sister's husband, and so on upwards, we may readily conjecture that the institution of *mākshā* originated in an atmosphere of matrilocal residence, matrilineal descent and cross-cousin marriage of both the types. The extension of the institution even up to the husbands of the daughters of the clan among the Chirus under particular circumstances is perhaps a secondary growth. The Old Kuki tribes among whom the institution of *mākshā* is now found do not practise at present matrilocal residence, matrilineal descent and cross-cousin marriage of both the types; they have instead patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence and cross-cousin marriage of one type namely that with the mother's brother's daughter and not with father's sister's daughter. But there are sufficient indications to show, besides the institution of *mākshā*, that all those conditions prevailed among these tribes in the past.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE I





# THE AGE OF THE BOULDER-CONGLOMERATE BEDS AT KULIANA, MAYURBHANJ

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Kuliana is a small village in the state of Mayurbhanj, situated in Lat.  $22^{\circ}4' N.$ , Long.  $86^{\circ}39' E.$ , between ten and eleven miles N.W. of Baripada town. A very large number of stone implements of palaeolithic type have been discovered in the neighbourhood in course of excavations within lateritic gravel beds. Similar tools also occur, among other places, at Koilisuta (2 miles N.E.) and Nuaberi (2 miles E.S.E.). But there the tools occur, either on the surface of the ground, in the bed of small hill streams, or embedded in lateritic gravel at depths which do not exceed 2 feet. This gravel is occasionally covered by an overburden which may be as much as 2'6" in thickness, but which is generally much thinner.

At Kuliana itself, the localities known as Tank A and Tank B, have yielded numerous tools discovered in place. These are of various types ranging from hand-axes and scrapers of crude form to finer forms. They occur between 2 and 6 feet of depth, being most frequent between 2 and 4 feet. In these two tanks, the lateritic gravels are underlain by a stiff hard laterite bed, which is locally known as *mākrā* in contrast to *guri* which is the loose gravel lying above. In this laterite, we do not find any rolled pebbles embedded. Below the hard and compact laterite in Tank A, at a depth of 20' from the the surface, we came across a whitish band, which looks like lithomarge. This compact laterite is apparently of primary

origin, while the upper gravel beds are obviously detrital in nature, for they contain man-made tools.

Within Tank A itself, the thickness of the secondary laterite varies within fairly wide limits. In one of the trenches dug by us, we struck the lower compact bed at a depth of 4' from the top; while in another, we reached it at about 7' from the same level. The two beds merge into one another, and it is very often difficult to distinguish one from the other by mere sight.

In Trench No. 1 Tank A Kuliana, there does not seem to be any mineralogical difference between the compact layers below and the loose gravel beds above. At 5' below ground level, quartz, muscovite and haematite occurred in the compact bed, while at 4', there occurred quartz, decomposed felspar and haematite. At 3' again, muscovite reappeared along with the usual quartz and haematite. The only megascopic difference (besides the compact character) seems to be that in Trench 2 Tank A Kuliana, at 7' depth, we did not find any quartz pebbles, while higher up subangular, and even rolled specimens of the same rock appeared, bearing testimony to their detrital origin.

In certain parts of Kuliana, therefore, a variable thickness of detrital or secondary laterite overlies what seems to be laterite of primary origin. But farther south, in a locality which has been named Quarry C Kuliana, we came across an entirely different state of affairs. There, the gravel bed at the top contains numerous tools, but it gives place to a boulder conglomerate bed of unknown thickness below.

Two trenches were dug here running down to 12'6", but we did not reach the lower margin of the bed. The tools almost wholly occurred between 2' and 4'; only one split pebble was found at a depth of 9' 10" below ground level. This was not a tool, but it has a certain significance of its own, because every one of the boulders round about it was perfectly rolled and unbroken, only this one was broken. So this may have

been made by the hand of man; or as well, may not have been so made.

Anyway, the boulder conglomerate has a ferruginous matrix which is very compact. The matrix shows the characteristic vermicular structure associated with laterites; so the matrix was lateritized. There is one interesting feature about the boulders themselves. They are all of quartzite of different grades of compactness. Some are like siliceous sandstone, some compact and crystalline; many have been permeated by ferruginous solutions, others have remained unaffected. And no single fossil has so far been discovered in these beds up till now by us.

Now, the problem which faces us is this: The gravel beds seem to contain all the tools of human manufacture. It merges without a break into the boulder conglomerate below. As we have said, it is difficult to demarcate exactly where one begins and the other ends. What is the age of these beds? That is the question which we have to answer before any correlation is possible between the palaeoliths of Kuliana and those of other parts of India.

The localities where palaeoliths have been found at Kuliana are roughly half a mile away from the river Burhabalang. The river is at a depth of more than 30' from the gravel plain on which Kuliana stands; and this place is never reached by even the highest floods of the Burhabalang. An examination was carefully made of the boulders lying in the present bed of the river. These were found to be of all sizes, but boulders of nearly a foot length were quite numerous. They were mostly of quartzite, but many were also of dolerite, evidently derived from the dykes which run across the country. One seemed to be of serpentine. This is significant. The boulders in Quarry C Kuliana are generally of medium size and are all of quartzite, as far as we have observed at present. This seems to indicate that the boulder bed was not the work of the Burhabalang itself, but of some smaller tributary stream which flowed into it from one side.

If we look at the map of Kuliana carefully (73-J/12), we observe certain significant features in the landscape. The river Burhabalang flows between Brahmangaon and Kamata in almost a straight line. On observation, it was found that the bed here is made of quartz-schist and actinolite-schist (in one place we found a trace of copper pyrites in the rock), having a dip of 38 to 45 degrees to E. by N. and E.N.E. The river here flows strictly along the strike of the hard rocks. The country rock at Romapahari State Forest Block No. 3 is granite, according to Mr. B. Jena, the State Geologist. Southwards, there are outcrops of granite-gneiss near Tikaitpur, followed by numerous outcrops of mica-schist along the railway line in the neighbourhood of Nuaberi. At Koilisuta, we find mica-phyllite. The small hill at Panijia is apparently of quartzite.

These granites thus constitute slightly higher ground to the east and north-east of Kuliana. The neighbourhood of Kuliana seems to have been made of softer rock (probably mica-schist like that of Nuaberi) which has been weathered or lateritized completely. Naturally, streams therefore flow from the higher country eastward and north-eastward to meet the Burhabalang farther west. These tributary streams consequently flow against both the strike and the dip of the beds exposed along the railway line.

The Ghuturu nullah is one such nullah and the upper portion of the Kukrakhupi khal is another. Between these two lies the open country on which Kuliana stands. At the present moment there is no nullah flowing near Kuliana; but if we examine the contours carefully, it does not seem improbable that there was another nullah flowing from near Tikaitpur past Kuliana village towards the Burhabalang in the past. Just near 44 miles on the railway line, the 250 ft. contour line shows a re-entrant pointing towards Tikaitpur. There is also a culvert in the railway line at this point, indicating that water flows here in the rains. The 200-ft. contour also shows a re-entrant between Kamata and Bhalukundia. It

may be that the hypothetical nullah flowed from the neighbourhood of Tikaitpur down this point towards Balimundali, ultimately to flow into the Kukrakhupi khal instead of the Burhabalang. Or it may also be that it flowed a little south of Kuliana, nearer Kamata, and then into the Burhabalang.

My submission is that the boulder conglomerate bed at Quarry C Kuliana is the work of the lost tributary of the Burhabalanga. It was comparable to the Ghuturu nullah farther north. If that be so, this will explain certain things. The first is that the boulder conglomerate bed is of local occurrence within the village of Kuliana itself; as we have seen that the rest of that village shows primary laterite in place of the conglomerate. Secondly, it fits in with the fact that the boulders are of smaller size than those common in the present bed of the main river. Thirdly, it also explains why no dolerite boulders occur in the bed at Quarry C Kuliana in contrast to the deposits of the Burhabalang. The reason for the last seems to be that there does not actually occur any dolerite dyke between the village of Kuliana and Tikaitpur, although such dykes occur farther north at Koilisuta.

We shall now proceed to consider two more outcrops of compact ferruginous boulder conglomerate at the villages of Bara Nuagan and Sargachira. At both these places, on the western bank of the river, and near the junction of the main stream with the two nullahs shown in the map, we find outcrops of hard and compact boulder conglomerate. Opposite Sargachira, the conglomerate is found directly above and firmly attached to an outcrop of contorted quartz-schist. Opposite Bara Nuagan, its lower junction could not be clearly distinguished, as it lay partly under water. But at this point, there also occurs an outcrop of unfossiliferous calcareous clay. This calcareous clay is known to overlies a bed of limestone a few miles south of the town of Baripada. The limestone contains ostrea, foraminifera, brachiopods, shark's teeth and also corals. It is of Miocene age. So the boulder conglomerate at Bara Nuagan should be younger

than that. The first question is whether the outcrops at Sargachira and Bara Nuagan are of the same bed as the boulder conglomerate in Quarry C Kuliana. If they are, then all that we can say is that the latter is also of post-Miocene date. But the likelihood seems to be that the three outcrops are independent, and are the work of the three small streams with which they are associated ; one of them, on the eastern side, being hypothetical. Unless the boulder conglomerate at Kuliana yields some fossils, it will therefore be extremely difficult to say anything definite about its age.

It may be suggested that the boulder conglomerate is equivalent to the Boulder Conglomerate of Upper Siwalik Age in the Punjab and the Himalayas. We know that the latter was due to an intense pluviation in that period. But the boulder conglomerate at Quarry C Kuliana seems to have been due to the simple action of a hill stream, which later on became extinct. Where the slope of the ground and local conditions offer a sufficient explanation, there is no reason to suppose that the bed was caused by some more extensive general condition like an intenser pluviation in the past. If this argument be found acceptable, we find ourselves unable to correlate the boulder conglomerate of Kuliana with those of Upper Siwalik times in the north-west of India.

Another line of approach to the problem may be discussed here. De Terra has found some tools of specific design in the Soan valley. He has found similar tools in some of the Narbada beds in Central India ; and he has suggested that the beds in question are therefore of the same age (De Terra and Paterson : *The Ice Age in India and Associated Human Cultures* : p. 320). But we are afraid, tools can hardly be treated as zone fossils at the very outset of our enquiry. If our stratigraphic enquiry actually reveals that tools can be so used, then they may be employed in future for purposes of dating. Our problem is to find out the date of the tools themselves. But if we start with the idea that the same type of tool was

manufactured in different parts of India at the same time, it would amount to begging the question. Different types of tools may very well be homotaxial with one another in different parts of India. So our object should be to date the types of tools with the help of geological and not typological evidence.

The date of the boulder conglomerate at Kuliana thus remains uncertain. And we must look forward to further field work and more detailed observation along the river valley for evidence which may help us in this direction.







# STUDIES IN EYEBROWS AMONG THE BENGALEES\*

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The paper deals with my personal observations on the character of eyebrows among the Bengalees. The data collected were exclusively from residents in Calcutta and were confined to middle class Bengalees of higher castes. My observation included 200 persons only, of whom there were 160 males and 40 females and among these 200 individuals there were 20 children between the ages of 4 and 12 years.

Studies on eyebrows and eyelashes were undertaken by Prof. Rozprym<sup>1</sup> of the University of Masaryk on 600 individuals of both sexes of Lisén near Brno in U. S. A. Such studies had also been undertaken previously by Prof. Suk and published in the Report of the Annual Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1932.

The observations were carried out with the naked eye and required a very careful and minute observation.

Eyebrows are collections of hair which are found on the upper orbital margin of each eye and these groups of hair, on closer observation, are found to be arranged in certain directions and positions in relation to the orbital margin. The colour of the eyebrows was also noted.

I have given below in a tabular form the distribution of the different forms of eyebrows and as the family groups were very limited I dispensed with the study of any hereditary influence among my subjects.

\* Read before the Anthropology Section of the Indian Science Congress (Jubilee Session), Calcutta, 1938.

<sup>1</sup> Rozprym, F.—Eyebrows and Eyelashes in Man : Their different forms, pigmentation, and heredity, *J. R. A. I.*, Vol. LXIV, 1934.

Throughout my observations I have followed the classification of Prof. Rozprym (*vide* J.R.A.I., Vol. LXIV, pp. 353-395).

The form of the eyebrow may be defined as the area covered by the growth of hair on or near about the upper orbital margin. In all my observations I selected the left side as had been done by Prof. Rozprym.

1. Spreading Type :—In this type the group of hair begins with a narrow strip on the nasal side and gradually broadens as it approaches the temple. Of my total subjects 27% showed this type and of these there were 47 males and 7 females. The males predominate in having this type.

2. Even Type :—This type is more or less regular in shape throughout its entire length from the nasal to the temple side and it is more frequent. In my series I have 45% of this type, of which the females show a large preponderance there being 24 (60%) women and 66 (41.2%) men.

3. Double Type :—This type begins broadly near the nasal side and then thins down near the middle and again broadens out and finally narrows down towards the temple. This type was found only in 10% of the series of which there were 19 males and 1 female.

4. Narrowing Type :—This type has a broader outline near the nasal side and gradually tapers towards the temple. There are only 14% of this type of which males are 22 and females 6.

5. Peaked Type :—In this type the outlines at both the extremities grow irregularly but with a distinct peak-like elevation near about the middle formed by the growth of hair upwards. Only 2% of my series shows this type of which 3 were males and 1 female. Thus it is evident that there is almost no sexual difference in this type.

6. Arched Type :—This type shows the growth of hair from below upwards with a distinct curve in a regular manner.

There are only 3 persons of this type in my series of whom 2 are males and 1 female.

7. Rising Type :—This type shows growth of hair from below upwards in a slanting outward direction and exhibits almost no upper outline in the shape. I found only one male in the series.

Besides the types mentioned above Prof. Rozprym noted several other types such as Shedding, S-shaped, Falling and Irregular ; but in my series I had none of these types.

TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF TYPES

	Total 200	%	Male 160	%	Female 40	%	Rozprym TOTAL	Male	Female
1. Spreading	54	27%	47	29.4%	7	17.5%	40%	20%	20%
2. Even	90	45%	66	41.2%	24	60%	24%	7.2%	16.8%
3. Double	20	10%	19	11.9%	1	2.5%	15%	10.6%	4.4%
4. Narrowing	28	14%	22	13.8%	6	15%	14%		
5. Peaked	4	2%	3	1.9%	1	2.5%	8%		
6. Arched	3	1.5%	2	1.2%	1	2.5%	1.3%		
7. Rising	1	0.5%	1	0.6%	Nil	Nil	0.3%		

### POSITION OF EYEBROWS

The position of eyebrows is ascertained in relation to the upper orbital margin and this can be studied by a careful palpation. It is found that the position of the eyebrows varies with regard to age as has also been noted by Prof. Rozprym

1. Supra-marginal Type :—The groups of hair of the eyebrows lie on a plane slightly above the upper orbital margin.

2. Marginal Type :—The groups of hair lie almost along the line of the upper orbital margin and this is especially marked on the nasal side.

3. Infra-marginal Type :—The groups of hair lie slightly below the line of the upper orbital margin.

TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POSITION OF  
EYEBROWS IN RELATION TO AGE.

Types	6—12 years Children Total—20		Up to 50 years Adults Total—155		Above 50 years Old Total—25	
Supra-marginal	19	95%	2	1.3%	Nil	
Marginal	1	5%	137	88.4%	6	24%
Infra-marginal	Nil		16	10.3%	19	76%

From the table above, it is found that 95% of the children have Supra-marginal position and 5% Marginal and the latter were of a bad health and under-nourished.

Of the adults 88.4% show Marginal position and only about 10.3% have Infra-marginal position.

Among the persons above 50 years of age 76% have Infra-marginal position and only 24% show Marginal.

The figures as stated above more or less tally with the figures found by Mr. Rozprym.

#### DIRECTION OF HAIR

The direction of the groups of hair of the eyebrow means that the hairs run either in the direction of the temple or in the direction of the bridge of the nose. These groups of hair are also found to run in single or double lines. When the hairs run in double lines these may run from above downwards or from below upwards and almost in all cases in a slanting manner and always towards the middle line. It is also to be noted that in double currents the hairs may run completely from one end to the other uniformly or incompletely where one of the currents of hairs may be partially developed.

In my series of subjects, I found lateral directions in all the subjects and among them double currents were most prominent, claiming 96%. Of these 96%, there are 60% incomplete double

currents and 40% complete double currents. No case of single current is noticed in the series.

Single Current—Nil.

Double Current—Complete—40%

Double Current—Incomplete—60%

#### ABNORMAL TYPES OF EYEBROWS

Besides the types mentioned before, three individuals of whom 2 were males and 1 female show an abnormal type of groups of hair. These groups of hair besides their usual extension towards the temple, show groups of dense hair growing in the middle of the two eyebrows near the glabellar region. These groups of hair are called "whorls" and show two kinds of directions. In one series the hairs grow upwards in a curved direction with convexity upwards and this type is called Concentric whorl, in the other type which is Eccentric whorl the groups of hairs grow upwards on the nasal side of each of the eyebrows.

TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF WHORLS

Type	Bengalees Total—200	Rozprym
Concentric	6%	12%
Eccentric	Nil	4%

There is another type of abnormal eyebrow in which the groups of hairs merge laterally with the hairs on the head by upward and lateralward growth on the temple. I found only one such individual in my series.

Uni-lateral Whorl:—Instead of whorls being present on both the eyebrows, here it is found only on one side. I noticed only one in my series.

Besides the above Prof. Rozprym noticed another type of abnormal type of eyebrows in which groups of hair grow upwards

between the two eyebrows having no relation with the direction or the general form of the eyebrow. I did not notice any such specimen in the series.

#### COLOUR OF THE EYEBROWS

In these series of Bengalees it was found that 90% have black eyebrows and the remaining cases range between dark, brown and black.

# INCIDENCE OF THE MUSCLE PALMARIS LONGUS AMONG THE MARWARI COMMUNITY\*

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The studies in the variation of the palmaris longus muscle were taken up by Prof. Schaeffer<sup>1</sup> in 1909 and since then various attempts have been made by different observers to find out if the variation of the musculature is of a more or less sporadic nature without any special germinal background. It has been definitely demonstrated that the presence or absence of the muscle is strictly an hereditary phenomenon and the frequency of its absence in any group depends on the frequency of its absence in the ancestry of that group. It has also been demonstrated by different observers that the incidence of this muscle varies with the sex and even with the side of the body.<sup>2</sup>

Data obtained from the dissecting rooms of anatomical laboratories were not adequate for the proper study of the subject owing to paucity of material. Numerous workers in Europe and the continent were content in stating with some accuracy the incidence of its variation in general with regard to sex and to the side of the body. It was, however, found that their studies were inadequate and recourse had to be taken to more detailed study as to the sporadic or germinal origin of the muscular variations. Thompson<sup>2</sup> and his colleagues were

\* Read before the Indian Science Congress (Anthropology Section) held in Madras, 1940.

<sup>1</sup> Schaeffer, J. Parsons—On the variations of the palmaris longus muscle. *Ant. Rec.*, 1909, III.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, J. W., McBatts, J., Danforth, C. H.—Hereditary and racial variation in the musculus palmaris longus. *A. J. Phy. Anthropol.*, Vol. IV, 1921.



the first to observe the variations of this musculature among certain groups on a racial basis in the Washington University College of Medicine.

The importance of this muscle lies in the fact that it is totally absent in the anthropoid group (higher apes). There are a few other muscles of this type but Prof. Schaeffer has successfully shown that they are not so easily accessible for examination from outside.

In this study I have tried to find out the presence or absence of the muscle as revealed by a careful inspection and palpation on the volar aspect of the forearms among 200 individuals who attended my clinic for the treatment of their ailments. Mostly my subjects were between the ages of 12 and 65 years. It is a slender muscle which springs from the fascial investment of the upper part of the forearm, proceeding distally over the transverse carpal ligament, joins the carpal aponeurosis in the middle portion of the wrist, so that when the muscle is present the tendon is usually very prominent above the wrist. In some subjects the detection of the muscle can easily be made by slight flexion of the wrist or fingers so as to differentiate it from the muscle *Flexor digitorum longus* with which it may be confused.

As regards the accuracy of this method it has been demonstrated in the dissecting room that whenever the muscle is present the tendon is always big and long, and not thread-like so as to be missed even by careful palpation. Of course, I cannot say with confidence that my observations were perfect as it may be that I have missed the tendon in a few subjects and have recorded them as absent. But considering the prominence of the tendon in the forearm, when present, it can be safely said that failure to detect the tendon, if any, must be practically negligible. I may add that my observations were confined to absence or presence of a well-developed muscle. The subjects who were so fat as to make a definite diagnosis impossible were rejected.

Another fact which may be mentioned is that before the observations made by Schaeffer and Thomson and his colleagues,



several other anatomists had published data on this subject. But curiously enough they have only mentioned "subject" and it is difficult and impossible to know whether "subject" means individuals or only one of the forearms.

My examination was confined to 200 individuals of whom 140 were males and 60 females. The group may be taken as a random sample of the population and all the subjects were of the same community. Of the males, 8 were found to lack the muscle on both the sides of the forearm, 4 lacked on the right side and 6 on the left side. Of the 60 females it showed that 13 lacked the muscle on both the sides, 2 lacked it on the right side and 3 on the left. The data are given in a tabular form and compared with other data available.

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE MUSCLE PALMARIS LONGUS

TABLE 1

Marwari.	Total No. of cases.	Present on both sides only.	Absent on Right side only.	Absent on Left side only.	Absent on both sides.
Marwari.	Male 140	122	4	6	8
	Female 60	42	2	3	13
Whites.*	Male 585	471	22	24	68
	Female 616	487	31	36	112
Negroes.	Male 121	118	0	1	2
	Female 197	182	1	4	10
Japanese.	Male 25	22	2	1	0

\* "Persons of the usual European descent." Thompson, *ibid.*

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE MUSCLE PALMARIS LONGUS  
TABLE 2

		Percentage of persons with absence in one or both arms.	Percentage of absence in Rt. arms.*	Percentage of absence in Lt. arms.*	Percentage of absence in all arms examined.
Marwari	Male	12.8	8.5	10.0	9.2
	Female	30.0	25.0	26.6	25.8
Whites	Male	19.5	15.4	15.7	15.6
	Female.	29.1	23.2	24.0	23.6
Negroes	Male	2.5	1.7	2.5	2.1
	Female	7.6	5.5	7.1	6.8
Japanese Male		12.0	8.0	4.0	6.0

From the tables set forth above it is evident that among the males of my series the percentage of absence is less than that of the whites but greater than that of either the Negroes or the Japanese. But the females in my series show that the percentage of absence is slightly higher than that of the whites but much greater than that of the Negroes and the Japanese.

Thus from the foregoing it may be said that the absence of the muscle may have to do something with racial differences and it is not a matter of chance.

#### OCURRENCE OF THE MUSCLE PALMARIS LONGUS AMONG THE MARWARIS

No.	Age	Sex	Present on both sides	Present on Rt. side	Present on Lt. side	*Absent on Rt. side	Absent on Lt. side	Absent on both sides
1	42	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
2	39	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
3	51	m	x	p	x	x	A	x

\* Including cases shown in the last column, Table I.

No.	Age.	Sex.	Present on both sides.	Present on rt. side.	Present on lt. side.	Absent on rt. side.	Absent on lt. side.	Absent on both sides.
4	56	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
5	26	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
6	22	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
7	20	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
8	24	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
9	25	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
10	32	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
11	17	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
12	19	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
13	26	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
14	29	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
15	44	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
16	14	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
17	58	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
18	20	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
19	14	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
20	27	m	x	p	p	x	x	x
21	21	m	x	p	p	x	x	x
22	33	m	x	p	x	x	A	x
23	47	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
24	36	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
25	31	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
26	17	m	x	x	p	A	x	x
27	16	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
28	13	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
29	66	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
30	18	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
31	25	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
32	48	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
33	24	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
34	27	m	P	p	p	x	x	x

No.	Age	Sex	Present on both sides	Present on rt. side	Present on lt. side	Absent on rt. side	Absent on lt. side	Absent on both sides
35	44	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
36	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
37	56	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
38	41	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
39	46	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
40	22	m	x	x	x	a	a	A.
41	19	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
42	27	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
43	24	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
44	42	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
45	36	m	x	x	p	A	x	x
46	27	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
47	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
48	20	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
49	16	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
50	19	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
51	16	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
52	64	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
53	31	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
54	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
55	29	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
56	37	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
57	23	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
58	57	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
59	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
60	35	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
61	22	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
62	31	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
63	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
64	19	m	P	p	p	x	x	x

No.	Age	Sex	Present on both sides	Present on rt. side	Present on lt. side	Absent on rt. side	Absent on lt. side	Absent on both sides
65	58	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
66	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
67	38	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
68	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
69	39	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
70	25	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
71	32	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
72	48	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
73	19	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
74	47	m	x	p	x	x	A	x
75	53	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
76	44	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
77	21	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
78	31	m	x	x	p	A	x	x
79	24	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
80	22	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
81	33	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
82	45	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
83	58	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
84	65	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
85	27	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
86	39	m	x	p	x	x	A	x
87	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
88	61	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
89	31	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
90	18	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
91	57	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
92	35	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
93	39	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
94	44	m	P	p	p	x	x	x

No.	Age	Sex	Present on both sides	Present on rt. side	Present on lt. side	Absent on rt. side	Absent on lt. side	Absents on both side
95	23	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
96	29	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
97	36	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
98	25	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
99	32	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
100	37	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
101	34	m	x	a	p	A	x	x
102	39	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
103	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
104	29	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
105	23	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
106	42	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
107	44	m	x	p	x	x	A	x
108	49	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
109	32	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
110	34	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
111	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
112	33	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
113	27	m	x	x	x	a	a	A
114	61	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
115	48	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
116	31	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
117	23	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
118	21	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
119	28	m	x	p	x	x	A	x
120	37	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
121	49	m	P	p	p	x	x	x
122	51	m	P	p	p	x	x	x

No.	Age	Sex	Present on both sides	Present on rt. side	Present on lt. side	Absent on rt. side	Absent on lt. side	Absent on both sides
1	36	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
2	21	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
3	32	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
4	18	F	x	p	x	x	A	x
5	34	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
6	18	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
7	57	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
8	38	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
9	26	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
10	29	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
11	16	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
12	23	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
13	62	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
14	54	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
15	19	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
16	14	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
17	63	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
18	13	F	x	x	p	A	x	x
19	28	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
20	33	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
21	57	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
22	39	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
23	17	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
24	54	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
25	37	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
26	34	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
27	26	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
28	17	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
29	19	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
30	27	F	P	p	p	x	x	x



No.	Age	Sex	Present on both sides	Present on rt. side	Present on lt. side	Absent on rt. side	Absent on lt. side	Absent on both sides
31	24	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
32	46	F	x	p	a	p	A	x
33	36	F	P	p	p	x	x	—
34	26	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
35	23	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
36	47	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
37	45	F	P	P	P	x	x	x
38	30	F	P	P	P	x	x	x
39	23	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
40	18	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
41	25	F	P	p	p	a	x	x
42	26	F	x	x	p	A.	x	x
43	60	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
44	23	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
45	17	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
46	27	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
47	21	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
48	36	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
49	27	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
50	24	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
51	61	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
52	23	F	x	p	x	p	A	x
53	21	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
54	40	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
55	42	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
56	33	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
57	21	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
58	27	F	x	x	x	a	a	A
59	28	F	P	p	p	x	x	x
60	51	F	P	p	p	x	x	x

# THE PTERION IN INDIAN HUMAN CRANIA \*

BY

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AND

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The pterion according to Martin is the region on the lateral wall of the skull, where the frontal, parietal, squamous and alisphenoid meet. The pterion is not a point but a region and it is variable in form, dimension, relation and position. Wilder describes the pterion as "a region rather than a point and designates the upper end of the greater wing of the sphenoid, with the bordering bones, frontal, parietal and temporal." He says that the relationship of these bones and of the sutures are markedly variable and are of special importance in anthropological study. Ashley-Montagu has followed Broca and found three main types of pteria in human crania, viz. :—

1. The speno-parietal type—the articulation of the alisphenoid with the parietal bone and dissociation of the malar from contact with the frontal bone.
2. The fronto-temporal type—the articulation of the squamous with the frontal bone and dissociation of the alisphenoid and the malar from contact with the parietal bone.
3. The point type—meeting at, or approximately at, a common point of the four pteric bones—alisphenoid, squamous, parietal and frontal—malar not forming part of the pterion.

\* The paper was read before the Indian Science Congress (Anthropology section) held at Lahore, 1939.

We have taken the dioptographic tracings of 15 Indian human skulls supplied by one of our medical friends and examined 22 other skulls of the Department. The results are given below :—

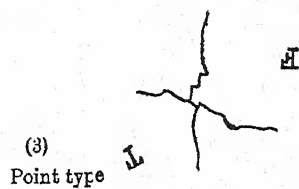
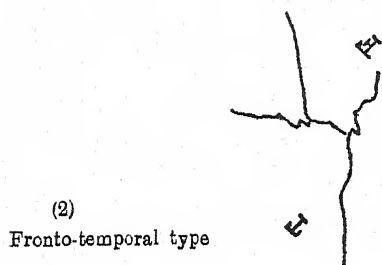
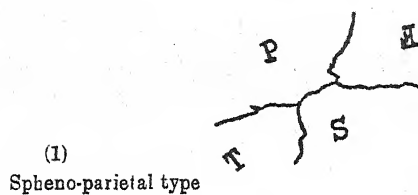
Name of the type	Number		Total percentage
	Rightside	Leftside	
Spheno-parietal	30	29	79.7%
Fronto-temporal	—	1	1.4%
Point	8	6	18.9%

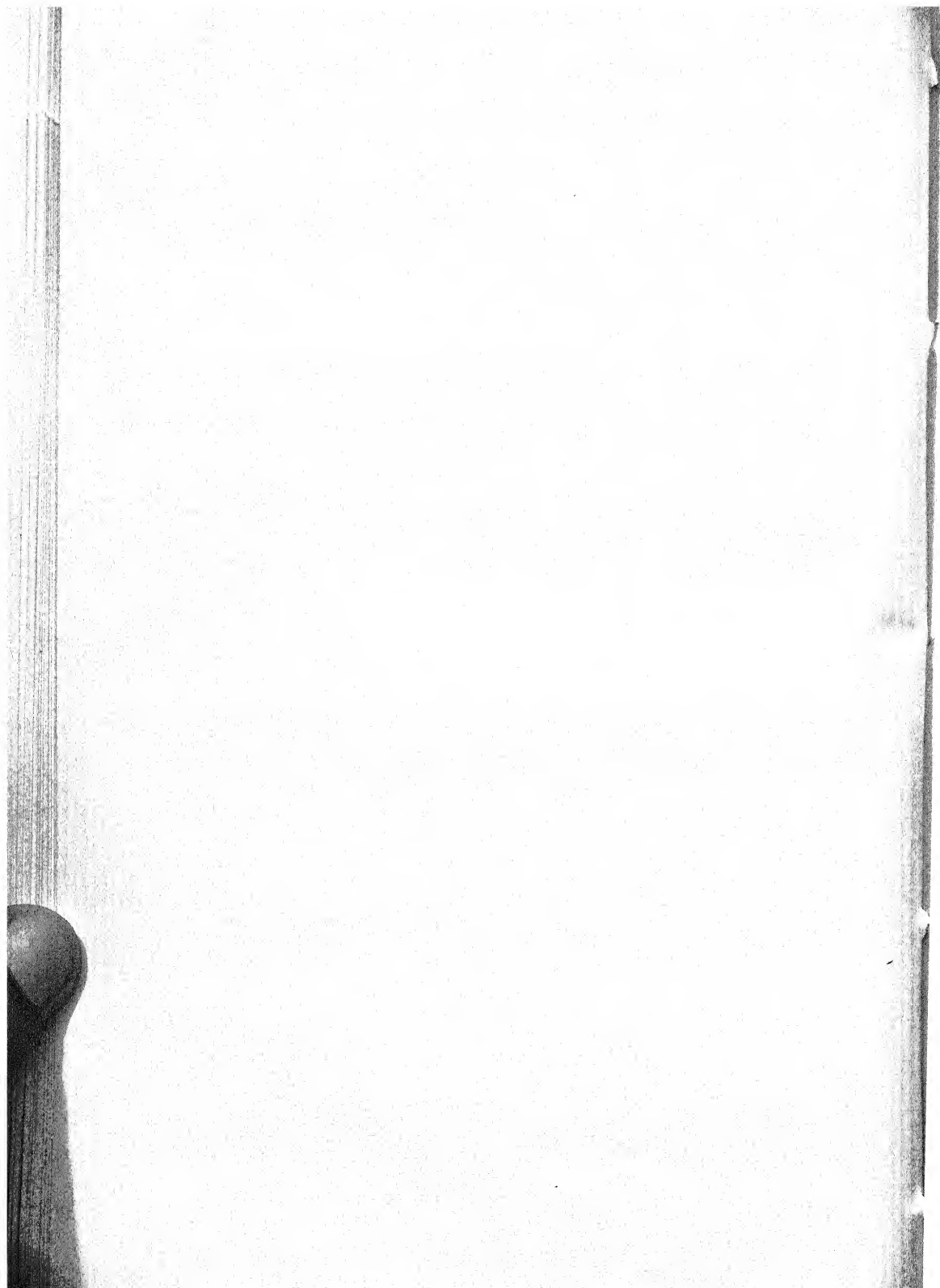
It is seen from the above that the spheno-parietal type occurs in 80.0% nearly. Mascarenhas has shown that spheno-parietal type occurs in 92.1% among the Portuguese, 84.6% among the Hindus and 83.6% among the Africans. Collins found 1.5% temporo-frontal articulations among American Whites, 5.2% among Negroes and 9.4% among Australians.

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*Tracings of types of Pteria in Indian Human crania*





# STUDY OF THE HEAD-HAIR OF THE NOLUAS OF BENGAL \*

BY

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During the year 1936-37, while a research student attached to the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, I made anthropometric studies on 200 adult male and 50 adult female Noluas of Bengal.

The Noluas of Bengal form a socially compact group scattered over four districts (Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur and Nadia) of Bengal, manufacturing mats from reeds. Their total numerical strength is 1,704, of whom 884 are males and 820 females. From the somatometric and somatoscopic points of view I have found that they are a short-statured, mesocephalic, mesorrhine, wavy-haired and dark-brown complexioned people.<sup>1</sup>

Hair samples were taken from the head (vertex) of 50 adult male Noluas. The hair samples have been studied with respect to—

- (1) Colour.
- (2) Form.
- (3) Size.

*Colour :—*

The hair samples of the Noluas were examined for colour by matching with the graded tones of the Fischer-Saller-Haarfarbentafel.

\* Read before the Indian Science Congress (Anthropology Section) held at Madras, 1940.

<sup>1</sup> Basu, M. N. —Blood pressures of the Noluas of Bengal. *Man*, July, 1938, p. 119.

## Distribution of colour tones of Noluta hair :

Fischer chart No.	No. of cases	Percentage
W .....	1 .....	2%
X .....	6 .....	12%
Y .....	43 .....	86%

*Form :—*

It is the relative degree of flattening of the hair shaft which is expressed as an index. The technique for microscopic examination followed is that of Trotter.<sup>2</sup> The procedure consists of cleansing the hair in an ether-alcohol solution and measuring the greatest ( $d_1$ ) and the least ( $d_2$ ) transverse diameters of the hair shaft at a given level, fixing it on a glass slide by means of canada balsam. Then the measurements are made under the microscope with the help of an ocular micrometer and a hair rotator. "Index" is obtained from these diameters.

$$\text{Index} = \frac{d_2 \times 100}{d_1}.$$

The mean index of 50 hair samples of Nolutas is 77.4

*Size :—*

Size or the area of a cross-section surface of the hair shaft is determined by multiplying half the greatest diameter and half the least diameter and the product by  $\pi$  that is ( $\frac{1}{2}d_2 \times \frac{1}{2}d_1 \times \pi =$  Area of a cross-section).

The mean size or the area of cross-section surface of 50 hair shafts of the Nolutas is .00315 Sq. mm.

<sup>2</sup> Trotter, M.—The Form, Size and Colour of Head-hair in American Whites.  
American Journal of Physical Anthropology, Vol. XV.



# THE GARO LAW OF INHERITANCE

BY

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## PREFACE

This work on the Garo law of inheritance is the outcome of an enquiry from the Director of Land Records, Government of Bengal, in 1939, to the Anthropology Department, Calcutta University, about the Law of Inheritance among the Garos in certain special cases. As there is very little published material on the Garos excepting the monograph of Major Playfair and some papers, and as they do not deal with these points, it was decided to take up this particular problem in the Garo area in Mymensingh in collaboration with the Revenue Department, Government of Bengal. The tour programme was arranged by Mr. R. W. Bastin, I.C.S., Settlement Officer, Mymensingh.

The writer of this report was selected as he had worked among the Garos on a previous occasion, for about two months in 1933. At that time he visited a number of Garo villages in the southern portion of the Garo Hills and had also done some work at Durgapur among the Garos of the plains.

On the present occasion he worked in three centres of the plains Garos—Durgapur, Bhabanipur and Haluaghat—and collected his materials in the course of the month of January, 1940.

The best thanks of the Anthropology Department are due to Rai Bahadur N. C. Sen, Director of Land Records, Mr. R. W. Bastin, I.C.S., Settlement Officer, Mymensingh, and his staff for the help which they extended to the writer throughout the tour.

The writer in this connection thanks Mr. S. L. Mehta, I.C.S., who kindly permitted him to accompany him during his hill tour in 1933. The field work among the Garos in 1933 was taken up at the suggestion of Kumar Sudhindra Chandra Sinha Bahadur, M.Sc., of Madhyam Tabbil Estate, whose help and encouragement greatly facilitated the work among the Garos. The writer takes this opportunity to express his gratitude to him and to his family. The writer also owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Maharaja of Susang and his family for their kind help and arrangements on the occasion of the hill tour in their company in 1933.

The writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the published works on the Garos by scholars like Major A. Playfair, Rev. C. D. Baldwin, Col. E. T. Dalton, Mr. F. A. Sachse and others.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Habitat and Population*

The Garos are to be found mainly in the Garo Hills and the adjoining plains of Bengal and Assam. They are divided into several branches—Abeng, Atong, Awe, Gara, Ganching, Dual, Kochu, Chibok, Akwe, Ruga, etc. The Garos who live in the Hills are known as *Paharias* or Hill Garos and those who are in the plains are known as *Lamdani* or Plains Garos. The Plains Garos who are at present living in the plains of Mymensingh are the subject-matter of this monograph.

The infiltration of the Garos into Mymensingh dates back from an early period.<sup>1</sup> In the Census of 1891 their total population in Bengal was 28,085. The Census of 1901 showed an increase, the population numbering to 33,191. In the Census of 1911 the number was 38,481 and in 1921, 39,581.<sup>2</sup> According to the Census of 1931 it is estimated at 34,286.

Mymensingh is one of the border districts of Bengal and the northern plains of it meet the Assam boundary at the foot of the Garo Hills. Movement into the interior of the district is very difficult due to the large number of *bils* and rivers. Only in winter when most of the water courses are dried up, it is possible to move from one place to another. The rivers, such as Kangsa, Someswari and others, which wind their way from the Garo Hills and pass through the plains, take the shape of big rivers with strong currents throughout the rainy season, but are transformed in winter into narrow channels which are fordable.

<sup>1</sup> Bengal District Gazetteers, Mymensingh, Calcutta, 1917, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Census of India, 1921, Vol. V, Bengal, p. 362.

*Language*

The Garo speech belongs to the Bodo group of the Assam-Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burman Family of Languages. This language is spoken by the Garos in general but in the plains of Mymensingh they have acquired the language of the local people (Bengali) and most of the adult male members of a family can speak and understand the local dialect. This is due to their close contact with the local people under whom they have to serve or with whom they have to work together. The female members who are busy with household affairs generally cannot follow the language of the plains. Some of the elderly women, however, who visit the market can follow the local dialect with difficulty. Though the adult male can speak the local dialect freely yet at the time of conversation between members of their community they never speak in this foreign tongue. They have, however, picked up a large number of local words. Moreover their pronunciation of their language has changed to such an extent that sometimes even their own people from the Hills cannot understand them. There are also dialectical differences between the different branches of the people. Thus the Abengs can with difficulty follow the language of the Atongs.

*The Field*

My investigations were carried out in three important areas of the Garos in Mymensingh—Durgapur, Bhabanipore and Haluaghat. Durgapur is an important centre of the Garos and is about six miles from the Garo Hills. Here a big market sits twice a week and Garos from the Hills as well as from the plains assemble to sell their produce. Durgapur is also important as it is the place of residence of the Susang Raj family who are the Zemindars of this Pargana. There is a road from Durgapur leading to the Hills which facilitates the movement of the people from the Hills. The Garos who have settled in the plains get

their lands from these Zemindars and on this account a large number of Garo villages are found on all sides of Durgapur. The Garos first settle near the foot of the Hill taking some lands from the Zemindars and as the number increases they advance into the interior of the district far away from the Hills. Generally Garo villages are found within an area of 12 to 14 miles from the Garo Hills. Bhabanipore is situated just on the border of Bengal and Assam and it is the important centre through which the Garos enter the plains of Mymensingh.

Haluaghat is also an important centre of this people. A big market of the Garos is also found at this place which sits only once a week. There is a road from Haluaghat Bazar to the Hill which is only five miles. Garo villages are mostly found on the east, west and northern sides of Haluaghat.

### *The Christian Missions*

In each of these areas Catholic and Protestant Missions are trying their best to convert the local people to Christianity. The Mission work is mostly successful among the Garos and a large number of them have been converted to Christianity within the course of a few years. The other local people such as the Hajongs, the Banais, the Hadis, etc., have tended towards Hinduism by adopting Hindu manners and customs. In some cases Hindu priests have taken up the worship of their gods, in this way giving them a place in Hindu society.

### *Family, Machong and Phratry*

The Garo family consists of father, mother and daughter or daughters. The boys as soon as they are nine to ten years old live in the *nokpante*, i.e., bachelor's dormitory. Though they live in this dormitory they take their meal in their family both in the morning and in the evening. In the Hills the bachelor's dormitory is well-organised and strict discipline is observed by the

boys. They are practically the training places for the Garo youth before their marriage. In the plains there is no proper *nokpante* but in every village one or more small houses are built where the unmarried boys in batches sleep at night. They all work with their family for the whole day and spend their night in the dormitory in company with other boys. In some villages where they have built plinth houses like the plains people they have a specially reserved room for the unmarried boys to sleep at night, and at day-time this room is utilised by them as 'baithak-khana' (parlour).

Daughters live with their parents until marriage. One of the daughters who is selected as *nokna* however continues to live in the family house with the parents along with her husband and after the death of the mother becomes the heiress to the family property. The other daughters are allowed to live in the family house until marriage. After marriage they can arrange a separate establishment for themselves. Generally land is given to them within the village to build their houses. They have to earn their livelihood and cannot claim anything from the family property. Sometimes when a woman has only two daughters, both of them are allowed to live in the family house and enjoy the family property but in case of difference with the *nokna* after the death of the mother the other sister is bound to leave the household without any claim on the family property.<sup>1</sup> In some cases in the plains the son and his wife are brought to the family house after their marriage. They live in the family house for sometime and then a separate establishment is made for them within the village. Some cultivable lands are also given to them for their maintenance.

The Garos are a matrilineal people and they trace their descent through the mother. All persons who trace their descent from a common ancestress belong to the same *machong* or motherhood. They are all supposed to be related by blood and

<sup>1</sup> Family property includes land, house, household utensils, agricultural implements, cows, bullocks, etc.



marriage between persons of the same *machong* is strictly prohibited. If a case of marriage within the *machong* takes place the parties are outcasted from Garo society and are driven out from the village.

Over and above the *machong* system most of the Garo tribes are divided into three exogamous divisions—Marak, Momin and Sangma. Each such division consists of a large number of *machongs* and may be termed a phratry. The members of one phratry cannot marry a member of the same phratry. Though this rule is obligatory yet among the plains people exceptions to this rule are not very few.

There are definite rules regarding the marriage of a Garo and the choice of the family is also restricted. A girl is bound to marry her father's sister's son. In his absence she is bound to marry a person from the same family and in the absence of the latter from the same *machong*. Only in exceptional cases when a man is not available within the *machong* the girl is allowed to marry a man from outside. There is also an obligation between the two *machongs* that as soon as a married man dies the *machong* people are bound to supply a man for the widow and in the case of death of a married woman the wife's people are bound to supply a woman. This rigid rule sometimes forces an old woman to marry a youngman and an old man to marry a young girl. This rigid rule has an important bearing in the Garo society. Though a woman is actually the owner of the family property yet the management and control of the property always rest with the male. So if a woman does not follow the marriage rule stated above the control of the property will go to persons of a different *machong*. This is never tolerated by the members of the husband's *machong* who have the right to control the property of the wife. For this reason if before marriage to a different *machong* permission is not taken from the *machong* which has the right to supply the male, a fine is imposed on the parties by the *machong* people.



## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The property of the Garos—both movable and immovable—belongs to woman and after her death it passes to one of her daughters excluding others. The privileged daughter is known as *nokna* (heiress) and after the death of the mother she becomes the sole heiress to the family property and even her own sisters have no right to live in the family house without her sanction. In course of enquiry I have recorded instances where villages are of opinion that it is an injustice that one girl will get the whole property debarring others from any right in the family property or anything belonging to the household. For this reason some of them now-a-days do not declare any of the daughters as *nokna*.

Sanatan Sangma has six daughters of whom one is dead. He is a Christian and is serving the Christian mission at Birisiri. He has not declared any of his girls as *nokna* and he says that after the death of his wife the property will be equally shared by the daughters. (Table I.)\*

In a case like this formerly the plains people used to follow the rule which is even now prevalent among the Hill people. In the Hills a council of the elders of the *machong* is convened and they decide in favour of the daughter who is married to her father's sister's son. But when more than one of the daughters is married to the father's sister's sons the property is equally shared by them. If none of them is married to the father's sister's son or any of the near relations of the father the property goes to the girl who is married in the father's *machong*. But if there be more than one girl who are married in the

\* For Tables, see Appendix.

father's *machong*, difficulty arises as to the selection of the *nokna*. But the elders try to find out the man who is the nearest related person of the girls' father. This is an easy affair because all of them are eager to prove their relationship with the girls' father to get the whole property. In this way a man is selected as *nokrom* and his wife becomes *nokna*. They live in the family house and manage the family property. They are also bound to bear all expenses of the *delangsoa* ceremony of the woman whose property they inherit. But now-a-days cases like this in the plains are decided in a different way. Here when a woman does not declare any of her daughters as *nokna*, after her death the daughters who are married in the father's *machong* share the family property equally and the daughter who will occupy the family house will have to compensate the others for it.

Rashi of village Baruipara had two daughters—Falandi and Sangati. Both of them are married in the father's *machong* and they have shared the family property equally as neither was declared a *nokna*. After the death of Sangati her daughters—Bobi and Pekisi—have shared the property of their mother equally though both of them have married outside the father's *machong*. This is an exception to the general rule and illustrates modern tendencies. (Table 2.)

The joint heiresses are also responsible for the performance of the *delangsoa* ceremony and for this all of them inheriting the property are bound to contribute.

In some cases when the parents have declared one of the girls as *nokna*, before her marriage they make an arrangement so that other girls may get some share of the property though the *nokna* always gets a bigger share.

In Baruipara village, P. S. Durgapur, Nobo Rangsha has two daughters. Moniram Rangsha is his *nokrom* and Bashi Dawa is the other daughter's husband. According to the arrangement of Nobo's wife Moniram

will get the family house and three-fourths of the property and Bashi will get one-fourth of the family property though he comes from a *machong* different from that of the father-in-law.

This practice is becoming common in some of the villages of Garos who have penetrated far into the plains and have been influenced by the people of the plains. Some of the Christian families have gone further and are trying to imitate the custom of keeping sons in the family like the patrilineal people of the plains. They arrange to marry their sons to girls who are willing to live in the house of the husband's family. For this reason they have to find out girls of very poor family, who have not got any family property. But in most of these cases the experiment proves futile because the girls are generally conservative, and do not like the idea of staying in the husband's family. Those who come to live in the husband's house (under the influence of Christianity or for any other reasons) generally run away to their mother's family or start a new establishment for themselves after some years and cases like this are abundant amongst the Garos.

Dineng has two sons—Damsingh and Jitendra by his first wife, Meljan. Damsingh had been married to Kusum and the girl was brought to the family to live with them but after two years the girl with her husband left the village and made a separate establishment for themselves. (Table 3.)

The same was the case with the second son, Jitendra of Dineng. (Table 3.)

In the course of my investigation I enquired on this point from Rahani, the second wife of Dineng (Table 3), Aini, the adopted daughter of Dineng (Table 3) and other Garo females and I was informed that this dislike to live in the husband's family is more economic than anything else. The reasons which are put forward by them are that the income of the pair will go

to the husband's mother's family and they will have no right to keep any of their earnings as personal property. Moreover if any property is acquired by their labour at the time of living in the family house it will also go to the family and they cannot claim anything from it. But as long as the husband's mother is living their position is secure in the family and they are always considered as members of the family. But as soon as she dies difficulty arises because the *machong* people do not allow the son to get any share in the property and the *nokna* becomes the sole proprietress of the family property. The pair have then two alternatives to choose. Either they may leave the household and run a separate establishment or they may stay in the family house at the mercy of the *nokna*. In some cases where the woman does not declare any one as her *nokna* all the daughters, according to the Plains Garo usage, will share the property equally without considering the claim of the brother and his wife.

In this connection I may relate one interesting case in which how a man living in the mother's village has obtained some property from his mother.

In Rampur village, P. S. Durgapur, Malu intended to bring a girl for his son's (Noresh) marriage but as he did not find any suitable girl in the neighbouring plains villages willing to live with them after marriage, he brought a girl from a hill-side village. Both the families are non-Christians and the marriage was performed in the girl's village according to the Garo custom. Some-time after the marriage the girl (Meikhin) was brought to her husband's village and they all lived together in the family house. Then a separate house was built for the pair near the family house and they removed to it. A tract of land which was being cultivated by the son was also given to him for their maintenance but the son (Noresh) had to pay some money as the price of the

land to the mother in the presence of the sisters and village elders so that after the death of the mother, the sisters may not claim it as their family property. (Table 4.)

Now-a-days in some cases where the son has settled in the mother's village, a separate establishment is made for him, and with the consent of the daughters and in the presence of village elders a portion of land is given to him as gift which he may enjoy even after the death of the mother.

Tomir Marak has married Onkumoni of Raghunathpur but instead of living in the house of his wife as is the rule among them he brought her to his mother's village. Here he has built a house with the help of the mother's family and is living separately. A portion of the family land has been presented to him as gift with the consent of the sisters and he has also acquired some land by his own labour. The mother's family cannot claim any right over this property. (Onkumoni is an orphan girl and she has not objected to come to her husband's family.) (Table 5.)

After the death of a woman the property goes to her daughter (*nokna*). In the absence of a daughter, the woman will ask her sister to give one of her daughters for her adoption. This girl will then be recognised as *nokna* to that woman. The adoption of sister's daughter is a common occurrence among the Garos and it is thought of as an obligation on the part of a sister to give one of her daughters for adoption to the sister who has none.

Matijan is the first wife of Gulu and she has four sons and no daughter. Her sister Kulupjan has then been married by Gulu as a second wife and a daughter has been born to them. Matijan has adopted the daughter (Anthia) of Kulupjan (her sister) as her *nokna*. (Table 6.)

Another example is the adoption of sister's daughter by Ronchi, wife of Jakjil. (Table 25 ; see also Table 14.)

If a girl is not available within the *machong* the woman with the permission of the *machong* people will seek for a girl of a different *machong* for adoption. The girl will be accepted by the *machong* people and she will be considered as *nokna* to the woman. This is of rare occurrence as the *machong* people do not like that a girl of different *machong* will control the property of the *machong*.

Paramoni has no issue and as she is the *nokna* to her mother's family she wants to adopt a girl of the family to keep up the line. As no girl is available within the family and within the *machong* she has selected Dhummoni of Agadok *machong* with the permission of her *machong* people. After adoption the girl has been selected as *nokna* and will inherit the family property after the death of Paramoni. (Table 7.)

If a woman is childless and does not adopt any girl (which is rare as in old age she wants somebody to look after her and the family property), after her death the property will be equally shared by the sisters who are married in the father's *machong*.

Kanduri and Manakali are the two daughters of Gokul Shah. Kanduri was the *nokna* and she inherited the family property. Kanduri had no daughter but only a son. So after her death the property goes to her sister Manakali. (Table 8.)

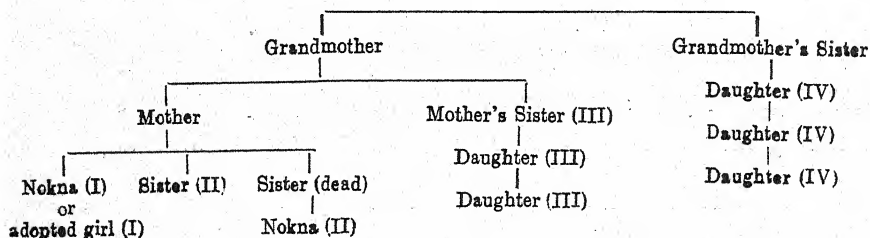
In a case like the above the daughters of a deceased sister who would have been the next heiress will take her place and will get their mother's share of the property.

Iskari and Khamchali are two sisters. Khamchali was the *nokna* of her mother and she inherited the whole family property including the house. She has two daughters



Mone and Gon. Iskari was living in the same village with her husband in a separate house. They have four sons and no daughter. As Iskari had no daughter the property on her death should have gone to her sister. As however, Khamchali died before Iskari, the property of Iskari was equally shared by Mone and Gon on the death of Iskari. (Table 9)

The sisters who are not married in the father's *machong* cannot normally claim anything from the family property; now-a-days this rule has been relaxed in some cases as noted before. In some rare instances when a childless *nokna* is looked after by her own sister who is not married in the father's *machong* the owner may transfer a portion of her property as gift to the sister during her life-time with the consent of sisters who are married in the father's *machong* and in the presence of the *machong* people. In the absence of any sister and sister's daughter the property goes to the nearest woman relation on the mother's side.



In this table Garo law of inheritance is illustrated :—

- I. From a woman to her *nokna* or adopted girl.
- II. In the absence of *nokna* to sisters married in the father's *machong* or their daughters in the absence of sisters.
- III. Mother's sister or her daughter or her daughter's daughter in the order noted.
- IV. Mother's mother's sister or her daughter if the former is dead.



## CHAPTER II

### THE NOKNA AND THE NOKROM

The *nokna* is the most important member in a Garo family and the law of inheritance primarily revolves round her. The selection of a *nokna* depends entirely on the choice of parents. If there be any difference of opinion between the parents about the selection of a *nokna* the opinion of the mother prevails. But some of the villages<sup>1</sup> do not agree about the authority of the mother to select a *nokna*. They are of opinion that the selection of the *nokna* must be made by both parents and the opinion of one cannot be neglected.

There is no hard and fast rule to select the eldest or the youngest daughter. Generally the daughter who is more affectionate and obedient to the parents is selected for the privileged position as they expect that the girl will serve and look after them in their old age. From the genealogical tables we find that the eldest daughter is not generally selected except where she is the only daughter.

After the parents have decided on the selection of the *nokna* they declare to the *machong* people that such of their daughters has been selected as *nokna*. When, however, they look for a suitable bridegroom for her, their choice is restricted and they are bound to select one of the father's own sister's sons. In the absence of such an actual cross-cousin they have to select a youngman from the same family and in the absence of one from the family, from the same *machong*, i.e., from the father's *machong*. In case a man of the father's *machong* is not available the parents with the consent of the father's *machong* bring one from outside, i.e., some other *machong*. But in the

<sup>1</sup> Uthrail, Kamarkhali, Pharangpara, Kharas, etc.

last case, before marriage, an understanding is always made with the *nokrom* that at the time of marriage of the next heiress, i.e., the next *nokna*, the parents must try to bring as bridegroom a man from the bride's maternal grandfather's *machong*. In the absence of a person from that *machong*, the *nokna* may be married to a person of her father's *machong*.

(1) Dumai was the *nokna* of Isori and Shomal. She was married to Nundi of her father's *machong*. At the time of marriage of Dumai's *nokna* (Minu), they did not find any groom from Nundi's *machong*; so before marriage with Mongol of Chamgong *machong* an arrangement had been made that at the time of marriage of their *nokna*, they should try to bring a boy of Nundi's *machong*. They observed that arrangement and their *nokna* is married to Tuju of Nundi's *machong*. (Table 25.)

(2). Ibam and Digambar selected their daughter Paramoni as *nokna*. They then tried to bring a boy for her from among the father's sister's sons. As no one was available among them nor from their family or *machong*, the parents with the consent of the *machong* people selected Moniram of Hajong *machong* as their *nokrom*. Before marriage they made an understanding with Moniram that if any boy of Ibam's *machong* is available, Paramoni's daughter must be married to him. Moniram and Paramoni are now living in the family house, the *nokna* having inherited the family property after the death of her mother. No child has been born to them so they have adopted a girl (Dhummoni). At the time of marriage of the girl Moniram tried to bring a bridegroom for the girl from Ratchel *machong*—the *machong* of his father-in-law but no one was available. The girl was then married to a man of her adopted father's *machong*. (Table 7.)

Though Malu belongs to a *machong* different from that of his father-in-law he was selected in the absence of a person from his father-in-law's *machong* as *nokrom* for Kheptin, the *nokna* of the family. Malu is now searching for boys from his father-in-law's *machong* for the marriage of his daughters—Khiroda and Jnanda. (Table 4 ; see also Chap. I., p. 11.)

The case of Benji *nokna* in the same table is similar.

In the case of poor families it is very difficult to get a man as *nokrom* who will live with them and look after them. So the girls of these families have sometimes to leave the family according to the desire of their husbands.

Madu is married to Nichin who is the sister of the *nokna* and so does not get any family property. After their marriage they have not been able to acquire any property. So at the time of the marriage of their daughter—Chintu, no one was willing to live with them as *nokrom*. She was, therefore, married to Nando who has taken her to his own village (Hat Pagla) where they are living at present. (Table 10.)

1. According to the Garo law of inheritance the *nokna* inherits all movable and immovable property of the family after the death of the mother debarring all others from any right on them and her husband the *nokrom* becomes the manager of the whole property.

2. After the marriage of the *nokna* the mother has no right to deprive her of the property. But if the *nokna* and the *nokrom* leave the family and start a separate household for themselves and relinquish their right to the property before the *machong* people, in that case a new *nokna* will be selected who will inherit the family property.

Aini is the adopted daughter of Rahani and Dineng. She has been selected as the *nokna* of the family. As she has not been on good terms with her adopted parents

she has left their house and has started a separate household with her husband in the same village. She has also relinquished her right over the family property and the foster parents are trying to get another girl to become their *nokna*. (Table 3.)

3. If the *nokna* and the *nokrom* are not on good terms with the parents and make a separate establishment within the village and do not relinquish their right to the family property, they are bound to look after the parents and to perform the last rites in order to get the family property. The mother in this case cannot disinherit the *nokna* and declare another daughter as *nokna* or adopt another girl as *nokna* in the absence of the latter (see Sec. 4) living outside the family house. She may maintain another girl to look after the family but without the consent of the *nokna* she cannot give a portion of the property to this girl.<sup>1</sup>

Monomoni is the *nokna* of Manakali. After the marriage of Monomoni with Rameswar, they did not get on well with Manakali. So they have made a separate establishment for themselves within the village but they always look after the affairs of the family. Monomoni after the death of Manakali will inherit the family property. (Table 8.)

(a) If the *nokna* after the performance of the *Delangsoa ceremony* of the mother leaves the house and makes a separate establishment in a distant village with the *nokrom*, she does not lose her right in the family property. This is allowed only in the Plains.

Oromuni is married to Tarachand and he had been brought as *nokrom* to the family. They were living in the family house and after the death of the mother (Lilmoni) Oromuni inherited the family property. After

<sup>1</sup> If the *nokna* does not look after the family but performs the last rites, she is entitled to inherit the family property in preference to others. Opinions differ in different villages.

the performance of the *Delangsoa ceremony* they have left the family house and are now living at Nowapara but they are still enjoying the family property. (Table 9.)

4. If the *nokna* or the *nokrom* is not in terms or is oppressed by the parents of the *nokna* and both are forced to leave the household, in that case they will convene a council of the *machong* or village elders of the *nokna* and present their case before them. If the council is of opinion that the parents are guilty of the charges, they will warn them and ask the pair to come back and live with them or they may even allow them to live separately within the village without losing any right over the family property. In this case an obligation is placed on the pair to look after the parents in their old age. But if they leave the family and relinquish their right to the property the parents are free to select a *nokna* from amongst their unmarried daughters or from outside according to Secs. 2, 3, 4 of Chapter III, Adoption.

(i) • Meljan is the daughter of Chengri, the first wife of Jantiram. She was selected as the *nokna* and was married to Nobin of her father's *machong*. They were living in the family house with Songmi, the second wife of Jantiram. As Nobin was not on terms with Songmi, he with his wife left the house relinquishing their right in the family property. They have now settled at Manikura, P.S. Haluaghat, and they will not get any portion of the family property. (Table 12.)

(ii) Nubal is the daughter of Meljan and Dineng. After the death of Meljan, Dineng married Rahani of his first wife's *machong*. Nubal has not been in terms with Rahani and after Nubal's marriage she has left the family house relinquishing her right in the family property. Rahani has adopted a girl of her *machong* to become her *nokna*. (Table 3.)

5. If the *nokna* after her marriage dies before her mother, in that case the parents are under an obligation to supply the *nokrom* with a girl who will take the place of the former *nokna*. If they have any marriageable girl of their own she is bound to marry the *nokrom* and in the absence of a girl of their own, a girl from the family is supplied to him to take the place of the *nokna*. In the absence of a girl from the family, a girl of the same *machong* is adopted to become the *nokna* of the family. In rare cases, with the permission of the *machong* people, a girl from a different *machong* even is adopted to take the place of the deceased *nokna*.

Simji had three daughters of whom Annamoni was the youngest. She was selected as the *nokna* of the family and was married to Sanu who was her own father's sister's son. After giving birth to several children Annamoni died. As Simji had no other unmarried daughter at that time she brought a girl (Gunumoni) from her *machong* for Sanu. That girl after giving birth to a daughter died. Then Simji again supplied another girl (Jinnomoni) from her *machong* to Sanu. That girl is at present living in the family house and enjoying the family property. (Table 16; see also Table 13.)

5(a) On the other hand after the death of the *nokrom* if he has any marriageable brother, he is bound to marry the *nokna* and to take the place of the *nokrom*. Refusal to do so is severely dealt with. In the absence of a marriageable man in the family, a man from the *machong* is asked to marry the *nokna*.

Jalokmoni is the *nokna* of Sumitra. In the absence of a man from her father's *machong* she was married to Ganesh but he died after some years. Ganesh's brother Ronad then married Jalokmoni and has taken the place of his brother as *nokrom*. (Table 14).



(b) Sometimes even a married man of the husband's *machong* is supplied to marry the *nokna* with her consent.

(c) If a man who is supplied by the *machong* to take the place of the deceased is found condemned<sup>1</sup> by his own *machong* for his bad deeds, the woman's people have the right to refuse him.

Swarnamoni is the daughter of Phala and Ataram. She is the *nokna* of the family and was married to Sajla of her father's *machong*. After the birth of three sons Sajla died. Sajla's relatives then selected Kalachand to take the place of Sajla as *nokrom*. But Ataram rejected the proposal on the ground that Kalachand had been condemned by his *machong* people for some of his bad deeds so he could not be selected. As no other person of Sajla's *machong* was available, Swarnamoni was married to Megaru of another *machong*. Kalachand then instituted a suit in the Court at Netrokona as the legitimate person to become the *nokrom* of the family. (Table 13.) The case was decided in favour of Megaru.

6. If the *nokna* is not on good terms with the husband and leaves the family, she is asked by her people to present her case before the village elders and if she agrees, a village council is convened. The council after hearing both the parties tries to settle the dispute and unite them again. But if the girl does not agree to return to the household she loses her claim on the family property. The *nokrom* is then supplied with a girl from the family (Section 5) who will become the *nokna* of the family. (See also section 12.)

7. If the *nokrom* is not in terms with his wife or his parents-in-law and leaves the household of his own accord after staying with them for some years, he cannot claim any

<sup>1</sup> A person is condemned when he has been guilty of sex offence.



compensation except *babaria*.<sup>1</sup> But if he is ill-treated by the family he has the option to summon the village council for redress. On such appeal an amicable settlement may be made between the parties. But if after the settlement he is still unable to live with them,<sup>2</sup> he is free to marry any other girl and leave the household without paying any compensation.

Lalita is the *nokna* of Guluk and Kanduri. She was married to Chili of her father's *machong*. As Chili was not in terms with the family he informed the *machong* people about his grievances and they settled the dispute. But after this, trouble arose between them, so, he left the family of his own accord informing his grievance to the *machong* people. In this case Lalita's family did not pay any compensation as Chili left the family of his own accord. Lalita then married Gorachand of Ruram<sup>3</sup> *machong* and after his death Sarup of the same *machong* who also died after some years. Chili again married a girl of Ratchel *machong* and settled there. (Table 14.)

If he leaves the household without any grievance or without informing the *machong* people of his wife about the

<sup>1</sup> This is a kind of gift presented to the youngman by his parents or family when he goes to live with his wife's family. It generally consists of a brass plate and other utensils, some wearing apparel and in some cases a bullock. The rule is that after the death of the man, these things excepting wearing apparel are to be returned to his family by the wife or her family even if the things are worn out or broken into pieces. This rule is also applicable in the case of animals too. But in case of death of the animal before the man, the wife's family is not liable to pay for them. Now-a-days the custom is becoming obsolete as the wife's people do not agree to accept things which are to be returned after the death of the man.

<sup>2</sup> If the wife is not in terms with the husband she generally quarrels with him on petty matters and does not look after the comfort of her husband but she never asks him to leave the house. In this way the husband is forced to leave the house and she is free to marry another man.

<sup>3</sup> According to the men of this village Ruram and Areng are the two branches of the same *machong*.

cause, the girls' people has the right to claim for a compensation from both the man and his second wife (provided he remarries) and the sum to be levied is decided by the *machong* elders.

8. If the *nokrom* for any reason leaves the *nokna*, she is free to marry another person but her father's sister's sons have the first claim to marry her and in their absence a man of the father's *machong*. In case when a person from father's *machong* is not available the *nokna* is allowed to marry a man from outside.

9(a) If after the birth of a daughter the *nokna* leaves the household, the daughter will inherit the family property. And as long as the daughter is minor, the father, if he lives with the daughter, will look after the property or the mother, if she returns to the family, will look after the property on behalf of the daughter.

See the case of Gobindo and Roy under Section 12 (Table 15.)

(b) If after the birth of a daughter the *nokna* dies and if the *nokrom* marries for the second time a sister of the *nokna* or a girl of the latter's *machong*, the married couple are allowed to live in the family house and manage the property on behalf of the minor daughter. The second wife enjoys the family property during her life-time but after her death the daughter of the first wife has the first claim to become the *nokna* of the family. (See also section 5.)

Simji has three daughters of whom Annamoni was the youngest. She was selected as the *nokna* of the family and was married to Sanu (of Deo *machong*) who is her father's sister's son. After giving birth to several children Annamoni died. As Simji had no other unmarried daughter at that time she brought a girl (Gunumoni) from her *machong* for Sanu. That girl after giving birth to a daughter died. Then Simji again supplied a girl (Jinnomoni) to Sanu from her *machong* who is now living in the family house. Kusumoni the

daughter by the first wife has been selected as *nokna* and is married to Narayan of Howi *machong* in the absence of a man from Ileo. After the death of Jinnomoni, Kusumoni will inherit the family property in preference to others. (Table 16.)

10. If the *nokrom* however marries for the second time a girl from outside the first wife's *machong*, against the wish of the latter's *machong* he is bound to leave the family and the management of the property falls upon his former wife's sisters or near relations.

Singshan first married Alti of Meikhin *machong* and a daughter was born to them. After the death of Alti, Singshan married Dulapi of Rangsha *machong*. Singshan had to leave the house of his first wife and is at present living in the house of his second wife. Jolma the daughter of the first wife has inherited the family property and is looked after by her mother's relations, (Table 2.)

Nevertheless, when the minor daughter comes of age she has to marry the father's sister's son or in his absence a man of the father's *machong*.

Case of Rosomuni and Adu (Table 9) and of Kusumoni and Narayan (Table 16) illustrate this contingency.

(a). When a man after the death of his wife wants to marry for the second time,<sup>1</sup> the rule is that the *machong* people will supply a girl in place of the deceased wife. If they fail to do

<sup>1</sup> When the first wife is still living the *nokrom* is allowed to marry for the second time in the following cases :—

(a) When his wife has no daughter and becomes too old to look after the household or (b) when his wife becomes too old and he is still young (which is not uncommon among them according to their custom of marriage).

The second wife of the *nokrom* is generally supplied by the wife's people from their *machong*. But if a girl is not available within the *machong* they may bring a girl from a different *machong* or allow him to marry a girl from outside.

so the man is free to marry a girl from outside with their consent to keep up the house. If the necessary permission is not taken before the marriage the pair has no right to live in the family house or enjoy the family property. But if consent is obtained, they get these privileges.

Minki was the *nokna* of Dasai. She was married to Sonaram who was the *nokrom*. After giving birth to two sons Minki died. Sonaram then asked the *machong* people to supply him a girl from the *machong* and as they failed to comply with his request they gave him permission to bring a girl from outside the *machong*. He then with the consent of the *machong* people of his wife, married Rano and brought her to his first wife's house where she took charge of the household. Her daughter Shamni has been selected as *nokna* and has been married to Shamidan of her father's *machong*. (Table 18.)

11. In the circumstances noted in Section 10, the second wife's daughter will inherit the property of her own mother, just as the daughter of the first marriage gets her mother's property.

Logoni, daughter of Singshan and Dulapi will inherit her mother's property. (Table 2.)

12. When the *nokna* is not in terms with her husband and intends to marry another man and with this purpose leaves the house, the husband at first approaches the *machong* people to supply him a girl in place of the *nokna*. They, however, try to settle the dispute at the first instance. If their attempts prove unsuccessful and they refuse to supply a girl then the *nokrom* demands the highest compensation which now-a-days amounts to Rs. 120 in the plains. Of this sum Rs. 60 will

be paid by the wife's people and the remaining portion will be paid by the new husband's *machong*. The *babaria* is also to be returned herewith. Sometimes a lesser amount is decreed by the *machong* council if they think it desirable. But if the girl marries a man from outside her father's *machong* the amount is not lessened.

Roy was the *nokna* of her family and she was married to Gobindo and a daughter was born to them. As Roy was not in terms with Gobindo she left the house and married another man. Gobindo summoned the village council and got Rs. 30, a pig and a gong as compensation. He then left the wife's house and married another woman. Roy then returned to her house with the new husband and managed the property on behalf of the minor daughter. A son and a daughter were born to them but they could not claim anything from the family property. The daughter by the first husband was married to Toubil of the first husband's *machong* and she inherited the family property. (Table 15.)

13. If after the birth of a daughter the *nokrom* dies and the *nokna* marries for the second time, she is allowed to live in the family house and to look after the property on behalf of the daughter. If daughters are born to her by the second husband she is not entitled to bequeath any part of the family property to her daughters by the second husband. But if the second husband acquires property by some means<sup>1</sup> living in

<sup>1</sup> This is a more or less anomalous situation. Men are now acquiring property in various ways some of which are noted below. In these cases neither the wife nor the mother attempts to establish absolute control.

(a) A man in the plains may take lease of land in his own name even living in the house of his wife. The income from such property may be partially utilised by the man according to his will.

(b) When a man acquires money by personal service say, as a peon bearer, servant, motor driver, etc., he is allowed to have some authority in the disposal of this income.

the family house, this property will be divided into two equal parts, one of which will go to the *nokna* and the other will be equally shared by all the daughters of the woman by her second husband. Sometimes, with the consent of the daughter of the first husband, the self-acquired property of the second husband is given to his daughters only.

Matijan was married to Dayal but Dayal died after the birth of the daughter Runimoni. Matijan was then married to Shambhu for the second time and she gave birth to four daughters of whom three are dead and the fourth Dainimuni is still living. In this case though Matijan is not a *nokna* still she has observed the custom of making Runimoni a *nokna* in preference to Dainimuni with the consent of the second husband. Runimoni is now living in the family house and after her mother's death will inherit the property.

Dainimuni who is living in the same village was first married to Lalit by whom she had three sons and two daughters.

After the death of Lalit she was married to Poroi Singh who belongs to the same *machong* as her former husband and she has given birth to two sons by this marriage. On enquiry it was understood that if any girl is born to them, still they will select one of the two daughters of the former husband as *nokna*. In this particular case Poroi Singh is actually enjoying the property which has been acquired by Lalit. (Table 9.)

See also the case of Rosomoni the daughter of Nayani in the same genealogy. (Table 9.)

14. In the absence of a daughter by the first husband the daughter of the second husband becomes the *nokna*. In this case no objection is raised whether the second husband comes from the first husband's *machong* or not but the daughter of the



second husband must be married, if available, to a person of the first husband's *machong*.

15. If the daughter of a deceased *nokna* who has herself been appointed *nokna*, after the marriage of her father for the second time be not in terms with them and has to leave the household for their ill-treatment she can make a separate establishment for herself with the help of her husband who is her father's sister's son or belongs to the *machong* of his father. In such case she is entitled to inherit the ancestral property and a share of the property which has been acquired by her father living in the family house with her step-mother, after the death of her own mother.

If such a *nokna* voluntarily leaves the household and makes a separate establishment, she loses her right over the family property and the daughter of the second wife will take her place in the family.

16. If a *nokrom* wants to marry for the second time he must relate his intention to his wife and with her permission he may bring a second wife to the house and live together. The position of the first wife is superior to that of the second and she is known as *Jik mamung* (principal wife) and the second wife is known as *Jik gite* (slave wife). The family property will be inherited by the daughter of the first wife.<sup>1</sup>

Nayani was first married to Elinath and they had two daughters by this marriage. Elinath acquired some property by his own labour and lived in a separate house. After the death of Elinath, Nayani married Shambhu, the elder sister's second husband. Both Matijan and Nayani, the two wives of Shambhu live in separate houses which had been built by their former husbands. Shambhu is now managing the property of

<sup>1</sup> Exception to the rule in the case of a man who marries the mother and the daughter at the same time (See the case of Jiring Sangma, Table 20).



both the wives and lives in each household for some time. Rosomoni the daughter of Nayani by her former husband has been married to Adu as *nokna*. Though Nayani is still bearing children, Shambhu did not object that the property will go to a person of the former husband's *machong*. On the other hand he himself arranged the match as he was unable to look after the property of both wives. Adu is living in his mother-in-law's house and his wife will inherit the family property after the death of Nayani. In this case Matijan is known as *Jik mamung* and Nayani as *Jik gite*. The property which will be acquired by Shambhu will go to Matijan and her daughters in preference to Nayani and her daughters. (Table 9); see also Sec. 14.)

(a) If the first wife has no daughter, after her death the second wife will become the *nokna* subject to the limitations set out in the next sections and after her death, her daughter will become the *nokna* of the family.

Changmi was the first wife of Changman and she gave birth to two sons and one daughter. After the death of Changmi, Changman married Songmi the unmarried sister of Changmi. Songmi has four daughters by Changman. The daughter of Changmi who had legitimate claim to become the *nokna* died some years after the marriage with Songmi. So Saromoni, the daughter of Songmi, has been selected as *nokna* and has been married to Osmania who belongs to the *machong* of his wife's father. (Table 16.)

(b) If after the birth of a daughter the second wife dies and the first wife has no issue, in that case after the death of the first wife the daughter of the second wife will inherit the property.

(c) In the presence of a daughter by the second wife the first wife cannot adopt.

17. If the second wife belongs to a different *machong* from that of the first wife and lives separately from the family house she cannot claim the property after the death of the first wife. The property in this case will go to the next heiress of the first wife. (See page 14.)

(a) If the second wife belongs to the same *machong* as that of the first and even if she lives separately, she will inherit the property after the death of the first wife (leaving no daughter).

(b) If both the wives have daughters by their first marriage and they live in separate houses the property of each will be inherited by the daughter of the first marriage.

Cases of Matijan, Elinath and Shambhu. (Table 9.)

18. Before consenting to become the second wife of a person, a woman from a different *machong* may enter into an understanding with the *machong* people of the first wife that she will inherit the property of the first wife after her death. In this case the second wife has to live in the family house of the first wife.

Bangshay of Garey *machong* was married to Ablek of Ratchel *machong*. After the birth of three sons and two daughters Bangshay died. Ablek wanted to marry again and as no girl of his wife's *machong* was available he was permitted to marry a girl from outside. He selected a widow (Khothek) of the Dalbot *machong* but the widow before her marriage made an agreement with the *machong* people of the deceased Bangshay that she would take the place of Bangshay and have control over the family property and they agreed to it. After the death of Ablek, Khothek looked after the property but as soon as Jangin, the daughter of the first wife of Ablek, attained maturity she refused

to obey the *machong* agreement and the widow was forced to leave the household by the ill-treatment of the daughter.<sup>1</sup> (Table 19.)

19. If a person after the death of the first wife marries a widow who has a daughter by the first marriage, the daughter of the widow by her first marriage cannot claim any property controlled by her mother through the second marriage.

(a) If the widow comes to live in the first wife's house, she will inherit the property according to Section 16.

20. When a man marries a woman and her daughter, the woman is considered as *Jik mamung* and her daughter is *Jik gite*. After the woman's death, though she might have borne children to the second husband, the *Jik gite* will inherit the property in preference to others.

Donni is the only daughter of Ramjong and Mangri. She is the *nokna* of the family and was married to Thani of her father's *machong*. A daughter was born to them known as Dengjari. When the daughter was about 16 years old Thani died. Ramjong tried his best to bring a man from his *machong* to marry Donni and her daughter Dengjari but as no one was available within the *machong* he brought Jiring Sangma of Manda *machong* as his *nokrom*. Jiring has married both Donni and Dengjari and is living in the wife's family. Donni is the *Jik mamung* and Dengjari is the *Jik gite*. After this marriage Donni has given birth to two daughters, Sardomoni and Ajarmoni, and Dengjari has given birth to a son known as Joben. Sardomoni has been selected as *nokna* and has been married to Thijing, her father's (Jiring) own sister's son. In this case after the death of Donni the family

<sup>1</sup> This is an exceptional case in which the wife is forced to leave the household by the ill-treatment of the daughter,

property will be inherited by Dengjari and after her death Sardomoni will inherit the property. If a daughter is born to Dengjari subsequently, still she will not inherit the property in preference to Sardomoni as the latter has already been selected as the *nokna* of the family with the consent of both the wives. (Table 20.)

21. If a woman has several daughters and all of them are married in their father's *machong* and the selected *nokna* after her marriage leaves the household, relinquishing her right in the family property, in that case all of them will share the property equally provided another girl is not selected as *nokna*.

If any of the daughters is married outside her father's *machong*, she is debarred in the above case from inheriting the property.

22. When all the daughters of a person marry outside their father's *machong* and the parents do not declare any of them as *nokna*, in that case after the death of the mother the *machong* people with the consent of other sisters may declare one of the sisters as *nokna*.

Paran and Babni had five daughters but all of them married outside the father's *machong* so they did not declare any of them as *nokna*. After the death of the parents the *machong* people with the consent of other sisters declared the youngest sister Nobi as *nokna* to the family and she is enjoying the family property. (Table 21.)

#### NOKNA'S SISTERS AND OTHER WOMEN

The *nokna's* sisters have no claim on the family property; so, after their marriage, they are allowed to stay for some months in the family to make a separate establishment for themselves. Sometimes when there are only two daughters they live together

in the family house and enjoy the property jointly but the *nokna* is the sole proprietress of the family property.

The *nokna's* sister after making a separate establishment for herself with the help of her husband tries to acquire some property with their joint labour. If they are able to acquire sufficient property by which they can maintain one of their daughters, they select one of their daughters as *nokna* in the same way as previously described and in this way a new household is started.

Poor families which are not able to acquire sufficient property, meet with great difficulty in securing husbands for their *noknas* and for this reason they are forced to allow their girls to go out of the village after their marriage.<sup>1</sup>

1. If any of the *nokna's* sisters acquires some property and dies without issue, the property is equally shared by the surviving sisters including the *nokna*.

Narai, Kentuni and Roche were the three sisters amongst whom Narai was the *nokna* of the family. After the death of Roche, Kentuni and Narai equally shared the property left by Roche. (Table 6.)

2. The *nokna's* sister or any woman who owns some property can also bring in a *nokrom* for one of her daughters and in this way a new household is started.

Kanduri and Manakali are the two daughters of Batai. After the death of Batai, Kanduri inherited the whole family property as *nokna*. Manakali after her marriage made a separate establishment for herself. Manakali's daughter Monomoni was selected as *nokna*. She was married to Rameswar of her father's *machong* and in this way a new household was started. (Table 8.)

<sup>1</sup> This is practised in the plains due to the different economic adjustment in the land system and to the influence of Christianity. In the Hills every village owns a certain tract of land and every family of the village has the right to cultivate a portion of this common land, so such a situation does not arise.

3. When a new household is being started by a woman who is not a *nokna*, she may elect any of her daughters as *nokna*. If she is not the first wife, she may override the claims of a step-daughter.

Bilasmoni is the daughter of Kalomoni, the third wife of Harinath. The first wife Sendumoni died without issue. The second wife Indramoni, the younger sister of Sendumoni died leaving a son and a daughter. The third wife Kalomoni the younger sister of Indramoni has one daughter only. This daughter Bilasmoni has been selected as *nokna* and has been married to Paresh of Hadema<sup>1</sup> *machong*. Though Bilasmoni has been selected as *nokna* in preference to Kamala the daughter of the second wife yet no objection has been raised because Bilasmoni's mother or her sisters had not been declared as *nokna* by their mother. (Table 12.)

4. If the *nokna*'s sister or any woman who is not a *nokna* does not declare any of her daughters as *nokna*, her property is equally shared by all her daughters after her death.

<sup>1</sup> Hadema and Deo are the two sub-divisions of the same *machong*.



## CHAPTER III

### ADOPTION

There is no custom to adopt a boy among the Garos. A woman can adopt a girl as noted earlier only when she has no daughter to keep up the family.

In the case of adoption a council of *machong* elders is convened and in their presence the girl is adopted by the family. A feast is generally arranged on the occasion by the adopter. In the case of adoption of near relations within the family the presence of *machong* elders is not essential.

Jangin had no issue ; so she wanted to adopt a girl. She selected a girl from her *machong* for adoption and then invited the *machong* elders in her house for a feast. In their presence the girl was given to her. The girl is staying in her house and has become the *nokna* of the family. (Table 19.)

1. In the presence of a daughter a woman cannot adopt. In some exceptional cases when the daughter leaves the household making a separate establishment for herself and does not look after the parents the woman convenes the council of *machong* elders and in their presence the daughter is asked either to relinquish her right in the family property or to return to the house. If she does not return to the house, she cannot claim the family property in future and the woman is free to adopt a girl. But in this case, the adoption of a girl must be made from within the *machong*, otherwise the daughter may claim the property after the death of the mother.



Rahani is the second wife of Dineng. She belongs to the same *machong* as that of the first wife. Dineng has a daughter by his first wife but as she is not in terms with the parents she has left the house relinquishing her right in the family property and has made a separate establishment for herself with the help of her husband. Rahani with the permission of the *machong* people adopted Aini a girl of her own *machong*. (Table 3.)

2. At the time of adoption from a different *machong* they will always take into account the particular phratry to which the girl belongs. A woman cannot adopt a girl from a phratry different from her own, *i.e.*, a Marak woman must adopt a Marak girl. Though, now-a-days, at the time of marriage the people do not always observe the rules of exogamy associated with the phratry or moiety divisions as the case may be, yet at the time of adoption they always take into consideration these rules.<sup>1</sup>

Paramoni in the absence of a girl of her *machong* adopted Dhummoni of Agadok *machong*. Here at the time of adoption the girl's division (Marak) was taken into account. As Paramoni belonged to Marak she could not adopt a girl from Sangma. (Table 7.)

3. No girl of a different branch of the Garos can be adopted, as for example, an Abeng cannot adopt an Atong girl or a Dual cannot adopt an Akwe.

4. If a girl is not available within the *machong*, in that case the woman, with the permission of the *machong* elders, can adopt a girl from outside the *machong* following the rules as laid down in Sections 2 and 3 above. On the day of adoption the elders of the two *machongs* are invited to a feast at the house of the adopter. Here in their presence the

<sup>1</sup> At the time of adoption, the *machong* of the girl is always taken into consideration as now-a-days some marriages are performed within the phratry (*i.e.*, Marak with Marak and Sangma with Sangma, case of Sanatan Sangma and Poali Sangma, Table I) though marriage within the *machong* is even now prohibited.

girl is given by her family to the adoptive family. From that day, the adopted girl lives with the adoptive family and she is thought to be a member of her adoptive mother's *machong*.

Paramoni was the *nokna* of Ibam. In the absence of a man from Ratchel *machong* Ibam brought Moniram of Hajong *machong* as his *nokrom*. They had no issue and so they wanted to adopt a girl.

As no girl of Paramoni's *machong* was available for adoption, she, with the permission of the *machong* elders, adopted a girl from Agadok *machong*. This girl will inherit the family property after Paramoni's death. In this case they have also observed the rules as laid down in Sections 2 and 3. (Table 7)

5. The adopted girl has to stay in the adoptive family and has to look after the adoptive parents till their death. After the death of the adoptive mother, she inherits the property and has to perform the *delangsoa* ceremony of the mother.

6. The adopted girl is bound to marry the adoptive father's sister's son or a man from his *machong*. If she marries outside the adoptive father's *machong* without the consent of the mother's people she is disinherited from the family property. If however, their consent is taken, she continues in her privileges.

Dhummoni is the adopted daughter of Moniram and Paramoni. At the time of her marriage Paramoni tried to bring a man from her father's *machong* (Ratchel) as Moniram her husband does not belong to her father's *machong*. As no one was available from that *machong* Dhummoni was married to Kadiram of her adoptive father's *machong* (Hajong) and they are enjoying the family property. (Table 7.)

7. If the adopted daughter, after living with the family of adoption for sometime, leaves the family and returns to her own family, she cannot have any claim in the property of

her adoptive family. She may, however, get a portion of this property after the death of the adopter through the ordinary law of inheritance, if as a near relation of the adopter, she is entitled to it, irrespective of the question of adoption and subsequent departure.

8. If the adopted girl belongs to a different *machong* she will lose her claim on the family property by leaving the house and the adoptive family is free to adopt another girl who will inherit the family property (See next section—Case of Aini, Table 3).

9. If, after the marriage of the adopted daughter, she leaves the house with her husband of her own accord and makes a separate establishment for herself and her husband and does not look after the parents, then the adoptive family will convene a council of the *machong* elders and the girl will be asked to be present. This council first requests the girl to return to the family and on her refusal, asks her to relinquish her right in the family property. In this case, the woman is free to adopt another girl.

Aini is the adopted daughter of Rahani, the second wife of Dineng. Aini is not in terms with her adoptive parents and she has made a separate establishment within the village relinquishing her right in the family property. Rahani and Dineng are now free to adopt another girl and Dineng is trying to adopt a girl of Nubal, his daughter by his first wife, who will become the *nokna* of the family. (Table 3.)

10. If the adopted daughter is not in terms with the adoptive parents or is oppressed by them, in that case, with the consent of the *machong* elders, she can make a separate establishment for herself. But she is bound to look after the parents and to perform the last rites in order to get the family property.

11. The adopted daughter after the death of the adoptive mother, cannot drive out the adoptive father from the family

house. Moreover, as long as he lives in the family house she is bound to maintain him.

(a). In the absence of the adopted daughter, those who will inherit the property are bound to maintain the husband of the woman till his death, if he does not leave the family house.

12. Enquiries were made as to what happens if after the adoption of a girl, a daughter is born to the woman.

Different opinions prevail amongst the people as to which girl will become the *nokna*. General opinion is in favour of the own daughter as she acquires it by birth but all of them agree about the right of the adopted girl to a share of the property.

As adoption is allowed only in ripe old age when the woman has no chance of bearing any child, the people have never heard of a case like this.

13. If a woman has a son and no daughter, she can adopt a girl to become her *nokna*. If the woman wants to give some of her properties to her son in that case she has to take the consent of the adopted daughter and her *machong* people and in their presence she may give only a portion of the family property which the son can enjoy even after the death of the mother. If the property is given during the minority of the adopted daughter, she may claim back the property later on.

Oktilok and Jangcher had a son (Baigi) but no daughter. As no girl from the family was available they adopted a girl (Jamini) of the adoptive mother's *machong*. She has become the *nokna* of the family and will inherit the property after the death of Jangcher. Jangcher with the consent of Jamini gave a portion of the property to Baigi. (Table 22.)

#### SELF-ACQUIRED PROPERTY

1. The self-acquired property of a man before marriage passes on to his mother and in her absence to his sister or sisters.

2. If after the death of the mother a man lives in the house of one of the sisters, after the marriage or death of the person that sister will acquire the property of the brother, debarring other sisters.

3. If a man acquires some property living in the family house, after his marriage it will be considered as family property and he cannot claim any portion from it. But as long as he will stay in the family house he has the right to enjoy it.

4. If a man at the time of living in the family house accumulates some money without the knowledge of the family members and after his marriage takes that amount to his wife's house, he will have to return the amount to his family as soon as the fact is known to them.

5. Self-acquired property of the unmarried daughters other than the *nokna* living in the family house, goes to the family. Property acquired by a married daughter, other than the *nokna*, from the time of her marriage till she goes to live separately at the end of about six months or so, belongs to her. But this does not hold good if she continues to live in the family house for a longer period.

6. The self-acquired property of a man after his marriage goes to his wife except as noted above.

7. If a man acquires some property<sup>1</sup> while living in the wife's house and then wants to live separately, he cannot get any right over his self-acquired property. But he enjoys the same so long as he stays with his wife in her house.

8. If a man has a daughter by his first wife and he marries for the second time and lives with her in the house of the first wife and subsequently another daughter is born to him by the second wife, then the property acquired after the second marriage will be divided into two equal parts, one of which will go to the *nokna* and the other will be inherited by the second wife and then equally shared by all her daughters. In some cases with the

<sup>1</sup> See page 26 footnote.

consent of the daughter by the first marriage the daughters by the second marriage get a bigger share.

### ILLEGITIMATE CHILD (DEBRUNG)

1. In the ordinary course of events an illegitimate child cannot inherit at all. After the birth of an illegitimate child a purificatory ceremony is performed by the mother by giving a feast to the village people in order to keep the child in the family.

Modri is the daughter of Ramkhun and Norin. Before her marriage she came in contact with a youngman and gave birth to a daughter (Rosi). After performing *Sangmaram* (purificatory ceremony by giving feast to the *machong* people) the girl was accepted by the *machong* and she was brought up by her grandmother—Norin.

Modri was first married to Chisin and after his death to China. She has a son and a daughter by the first husband and two daughters by the second. The illegitimate child Rosi of Modri cannot claim anything from her mother's property. She was married to Bolrea who has taken her to a different village. (Table 23.)

2. Only in the special circumstances when a woman has no daughter and she cannot get any girl from her family or from the *machong* for adoption, she may get the permission of the *machong* people to select her illegitimate daughter as *nokna* to keep up the family.

The opinion of the people is that as the girl has the blood of her mother so she shall get preference to an outsider who does not even belong to the *machong*. But difference of opinion prevails on the point amongst different villages. As no case like this is known to them they cannot say anything definitely.

3. The marriage of an illegitimate daughter is a difficult affair as no one agrees to marry the girl. For this reason generally a man from a distant village has to be brought for her marriage and she is taken by the boy to his village.



## DEBT, MORTGAGE, GIFT AND SALE

1. A man has no right to mortgage or sell or make a gift of any property to anyone. But in all cases of gift, mortgage or sale he acts as manager to his wife or daughter.

2. In the case of a gift to a son or to any person it is to be done in the presence of the daughters and *machong* elders to make it valid.

3. A woman is bound to maintain her children before marriage and if during this period the son or the daughter incurs any debt, the mother or the mother's family is liable to pay. But after the marriage of a man the responsibility lies with his wife's people.

## LOSS OF THE RIGHT OF INHERITANCE

1. If a woman marries a man of her *machong* she loses all her claims to the family property. This type of union is known as *madong* i.e., marriage with the mother and the pair is driven out from the village.

2. If a woman has illicit connection with a man of the same *machong* she is driven out from the village and is debarred from the family property.

3. Formerly the Christian Garos could not inherit the property of the non-Christian Garos but now-a-days this rule has been relaxed. At present if a non-Christian woman marries a Christian she thereby does not lose any right in the family property and she is not outcasted. Formerly non-Christians did not like this type of union but now-a-days owing to the increasing number of the Christians in the plains who are economically better off than the non-Christians the earlier rules have been relaxed.

## MARRIAGE WITH PERSONS OTHER THAN A GARO

Living in the plains the Garos are regularly coming in contact with other peoples and in some cases have contracted matrimonial alliances with them.



Here I shall discuss some of these cases and their effect on the law of inheritance. In all these cases it is found that when a person after marriage comes to live in the Garo family whether that person is a Hindu or a Christian or a Muhammadan, the rights to the property are always determined by the Garo Law of Inheritance and in none of these cases have there been any objection to it.

Narai was the *nokna* of the family and was married to a person of her father's *machong*. After the death of her husband she came in contact with Isan Sarkar, a Hindu, Kayastha by caste. He after becoming Christian married the widow who had no previous issue and came to live with her in her village. Isan before his marriage acquired some landed property and he looked after its management. As they did not declare any of the girls as *nokna* so after the death of Narai, Isan divided the property equally amongst the daughters. Dharani, the only son of Isan and Narai had been sent as *nokrom* to the brother's daughter of Narai according to Garo usage. Though Isan came from a patrilineal people, he did not object to follow the Garo Law of Inheritance. (Table 6).

Ramdayal a Garo who went to Silchar as labourer married there a Meithei girl (Mikoi) and brought her to his village at Kharas, P.S. Durgapur. Here he has built a house of his own and has acquired some property. They have no issue and as they have become very old, there is no chance of a child in future. On enquiry about the inheritance of property it is understood that the property will be enjoyed by Mikoi and Ramdayal throughout their life and after their death the property will be equally shared by Ramdayal's sister's daughters—Jamini and Chenchili. According to Garo Law, Mikoi's relations would have had the first claim on the

property if Ramdayal had stayed with his wife in her village. But as the girl came to live with Ramdayal the property will go to Ramdayal's family. (Table 24).

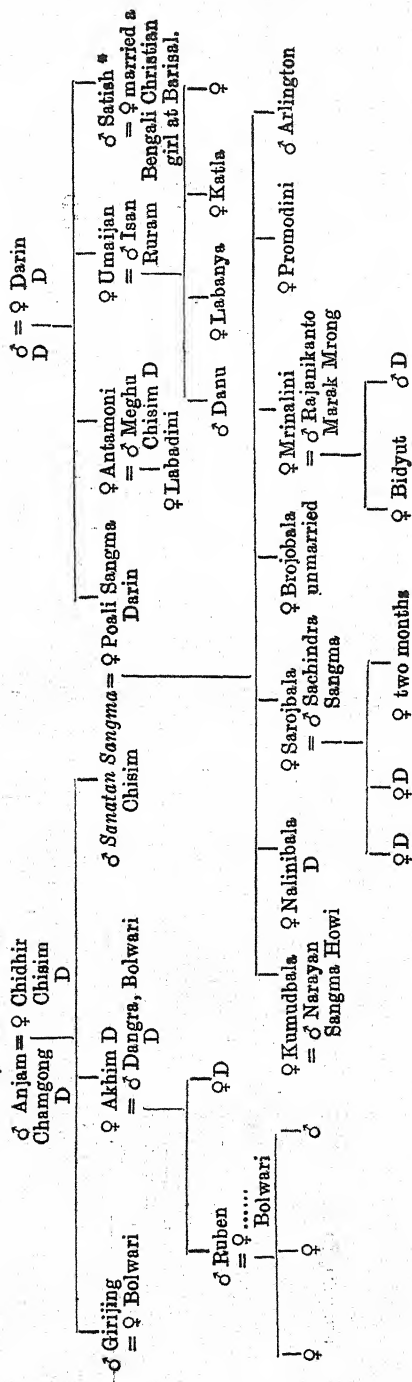
Ajari and Bandrey had three daughters. The eldest daughter Ronchi married Jakjil and went out of the family to live with him. The second daughter Shaguni had been selected as *nokna*. This girl came in contact with Gabriel who was a Muhommadan and wanted to marry him. As the girl was the *nokna* of the family the parents sought the consent of the *machong* people and with their permission they were married. Gabriel came to live in the family as *nokrom*; but at the time of marriage an agreement had been made with him that their daughters must be married to a man of Shaguni's father's *machong* and Gabriel agreed to it. (Table 25.)

**APPENDIX**  
**GENEALOGICAL TABLES**



### TABLE I

Ghorsit, Durgapur, Sanatan Sangma (Christian).



\* Now living at Tinsukia, Assam. Working there as a Ticket Collector A. B. Ry. ♂ indicates male, ♀ indicates female, = indicates marriage, D indicates Dead.

TABLE 2

## Abeng

Baruipara, Durgapur, Singshan.

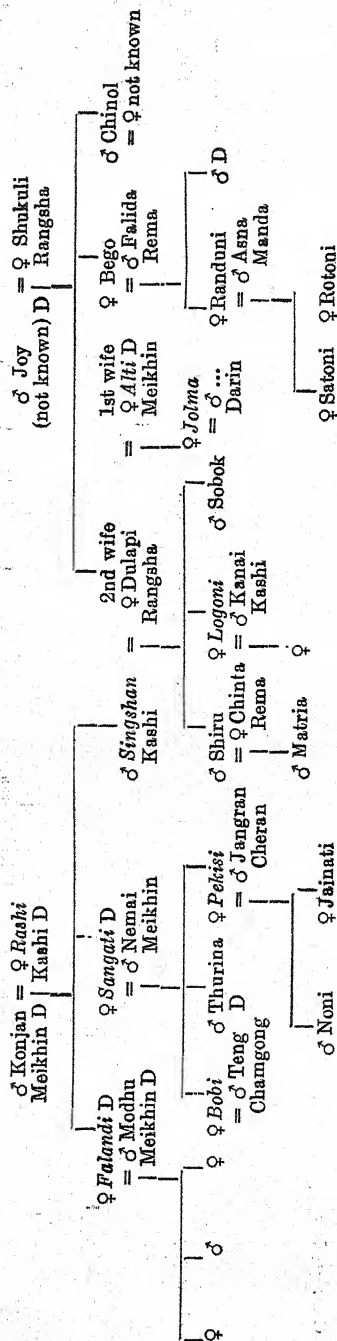


TABLE 3

Bhabanipore, Dineng (Christian).

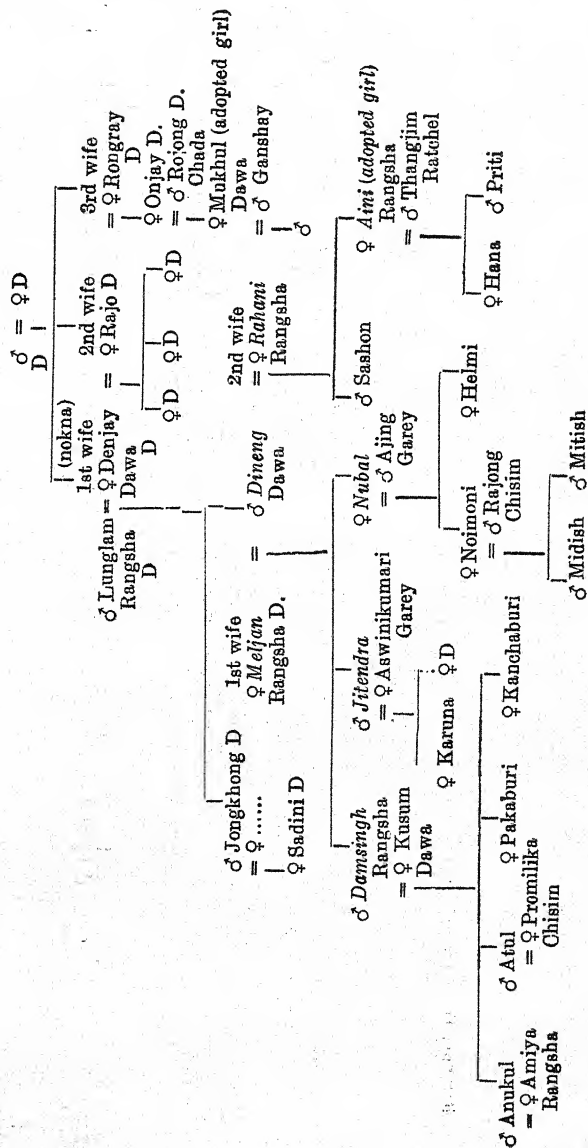




TABLE 4

Bampur, Durgapur, Malu (non-Christian).

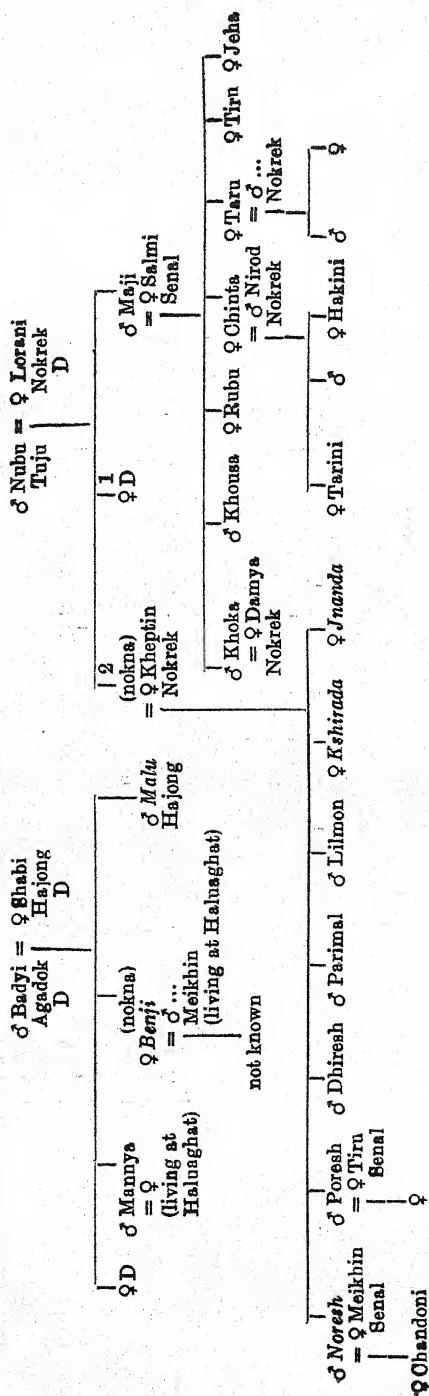
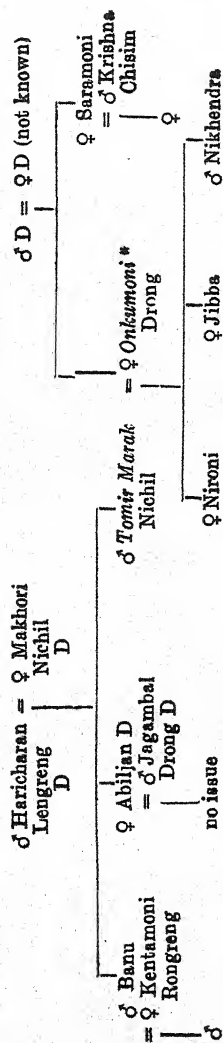


TABLE 5

*Chibok Garo*

Songra, Halughat, Tomir Marak.



\* Onkumoni was brought from Raghunathpur.

TABLE 6

## Kochu

Manikura, Haluaghat,  
Dharani K. Sarkar (Christian).

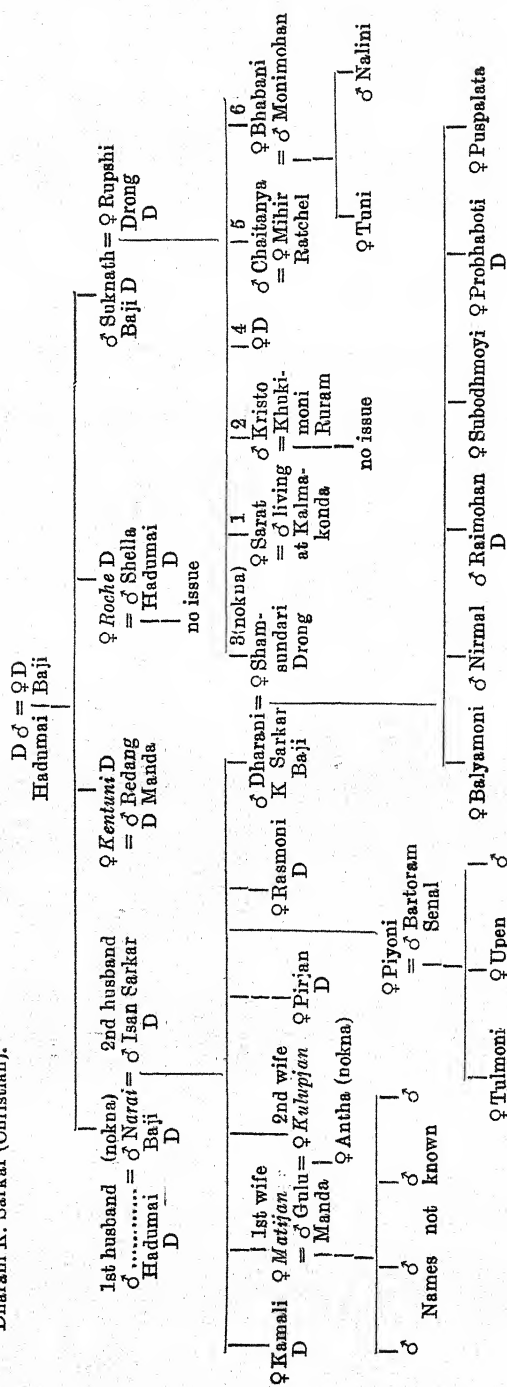


TABLE 7

## Atong

Gujirkona, Durgapur,  
Moniram( non-Christian).

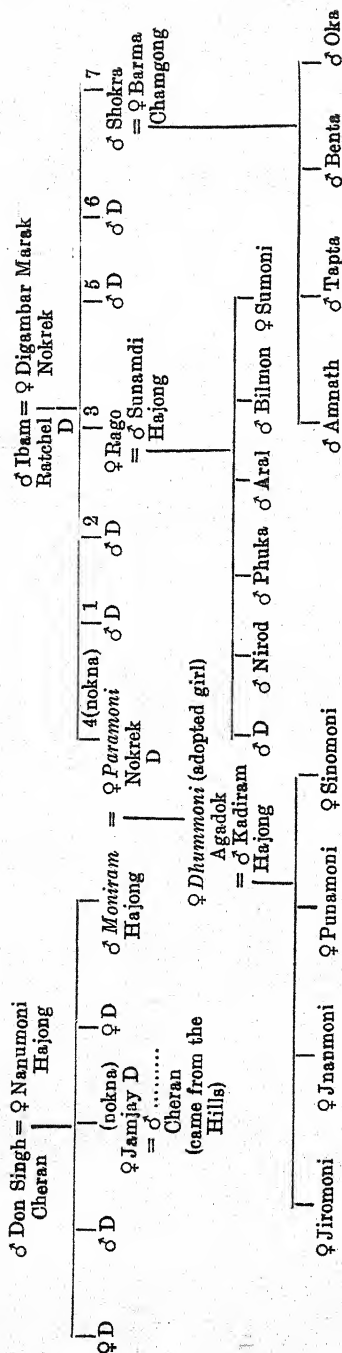


TABLE 8

## Kochu Garo

Bhagon Kura, Hahaghat, Koli Marak.

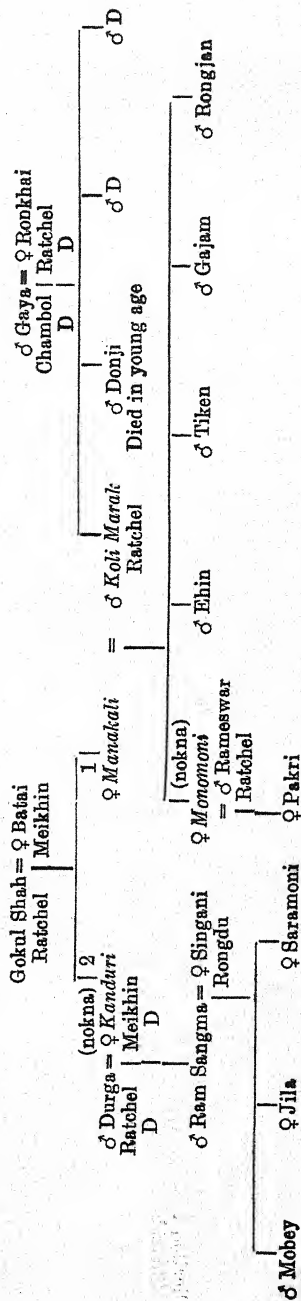
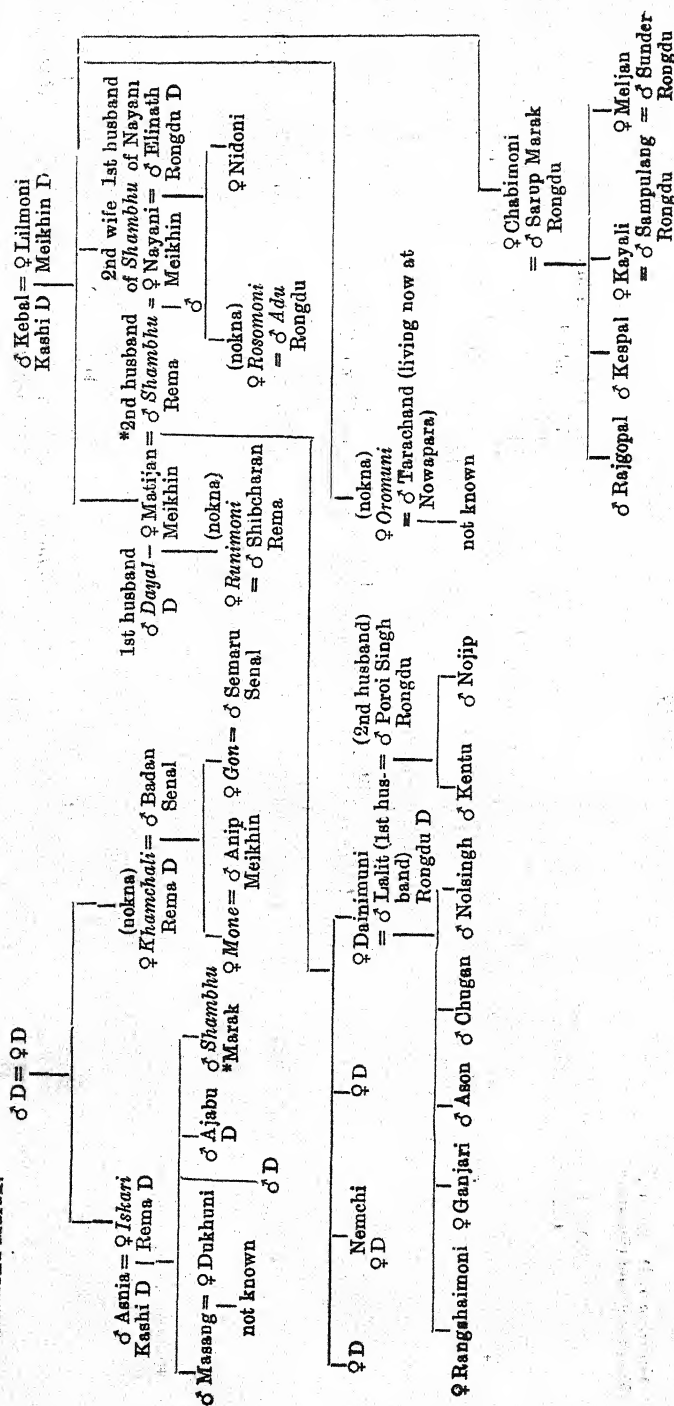


TABLE 9

## Dual Garo

Digalha, Halueghat,  
Shambhu Marak.

\* Same person.



TABLE 11

## Brag, Abeng

Uthrail, Durgepur, Hiramón (non-Christian).

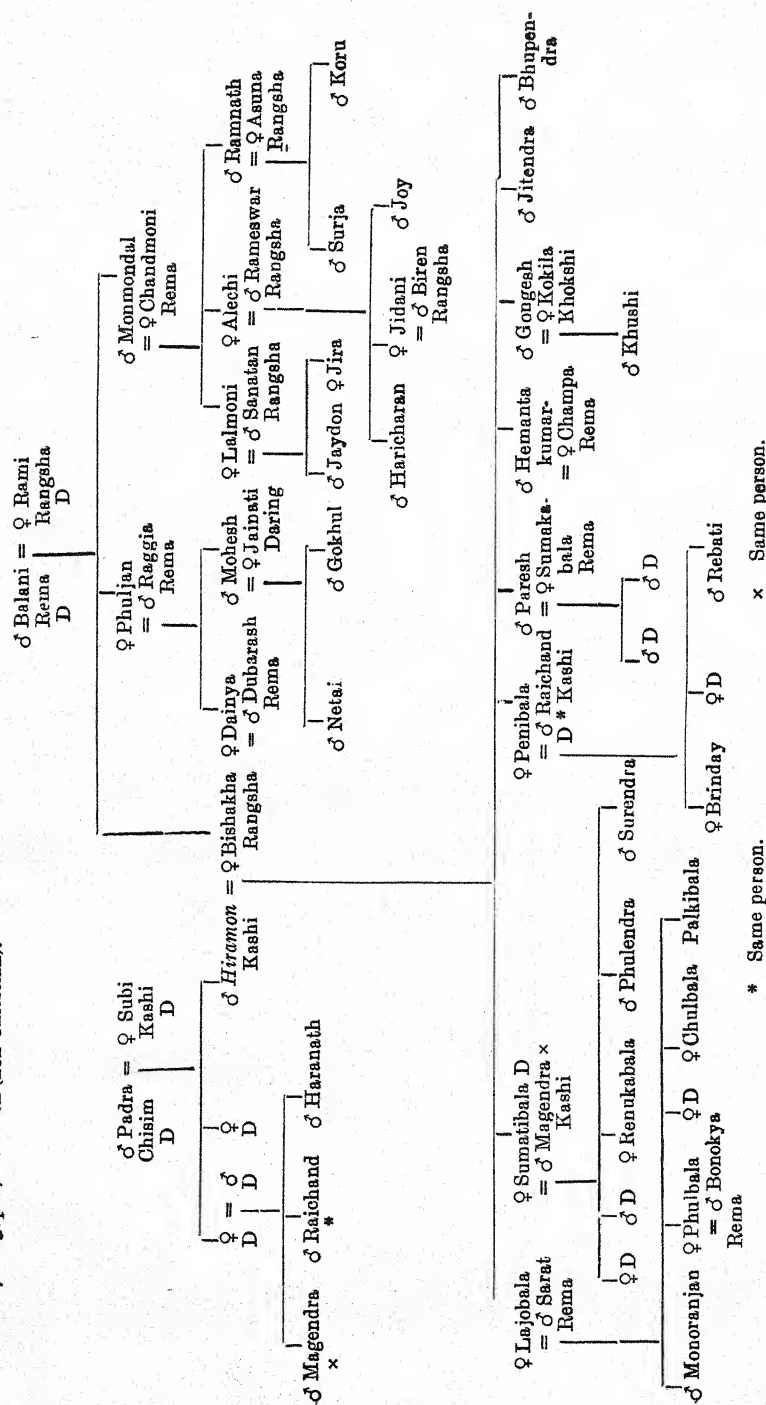




TABLE 12

*Abeng*

Ghosber, Halbaghat, Harinath Sangma (Christian).

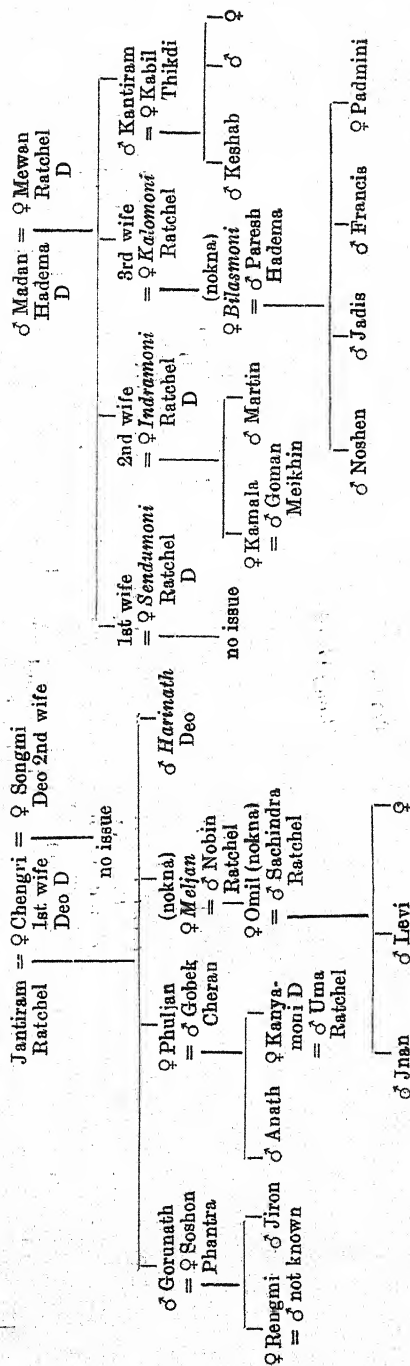


TABLE 13

*Abeng Garo*

Gamairtola, Megaru Laskar.

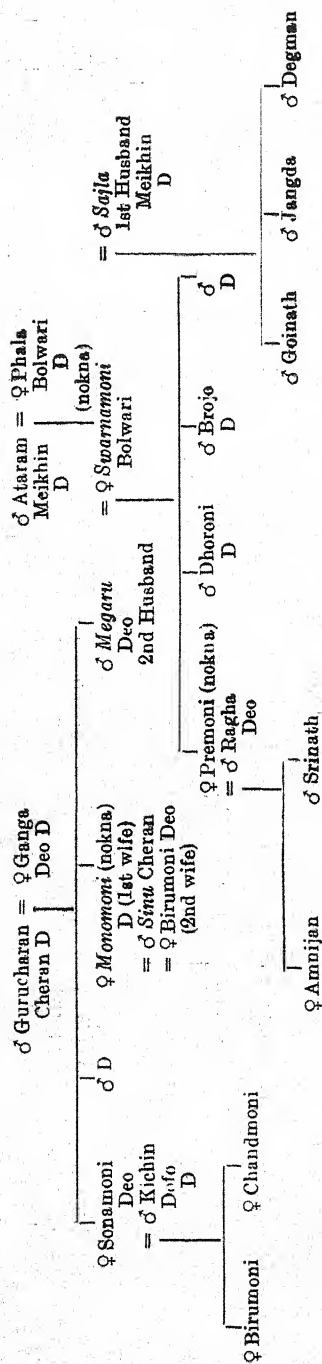
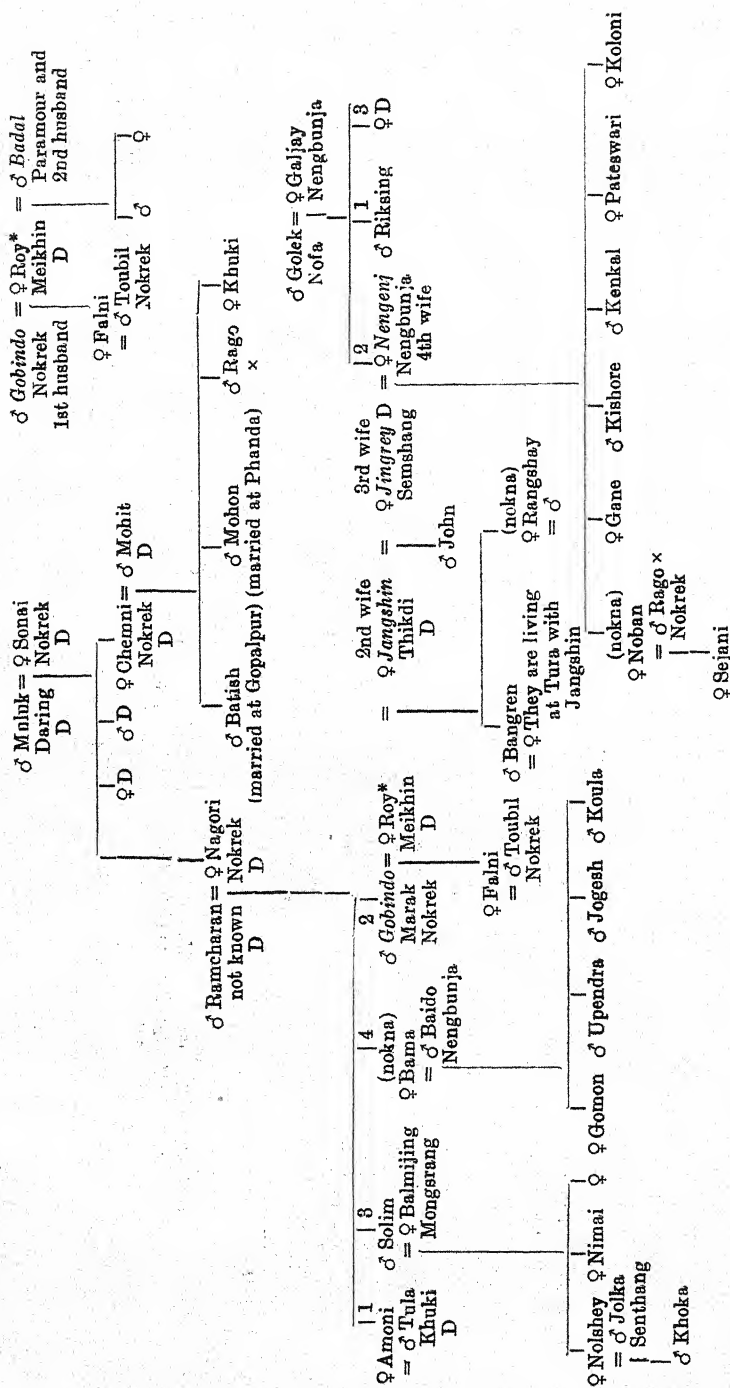




TABLE 15

## Atong Garo

Bijaypur Village, Durgapur,  
Gobindo Marak.



$\times$  Same person.

\* Same person.

TABLE 16

## Abeng

Sanu Saugma, Ghoshber, Haluaghat.

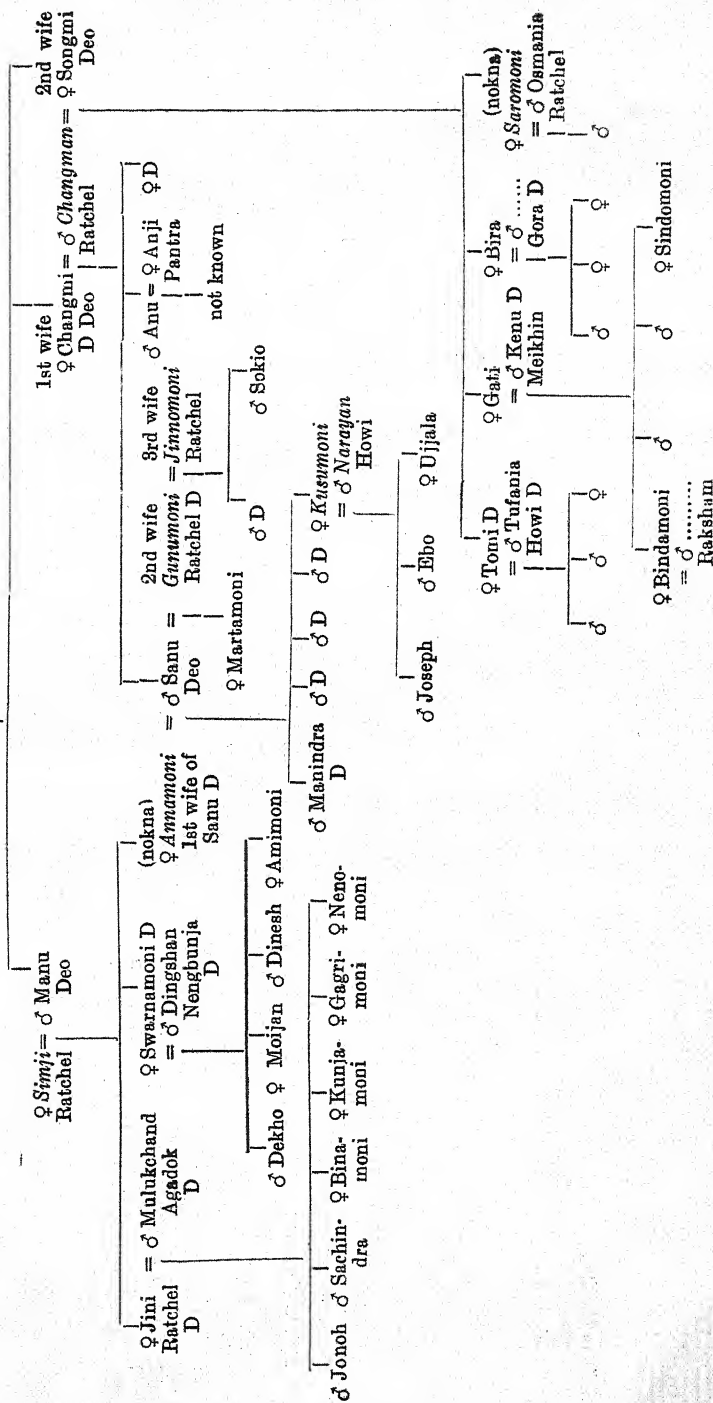
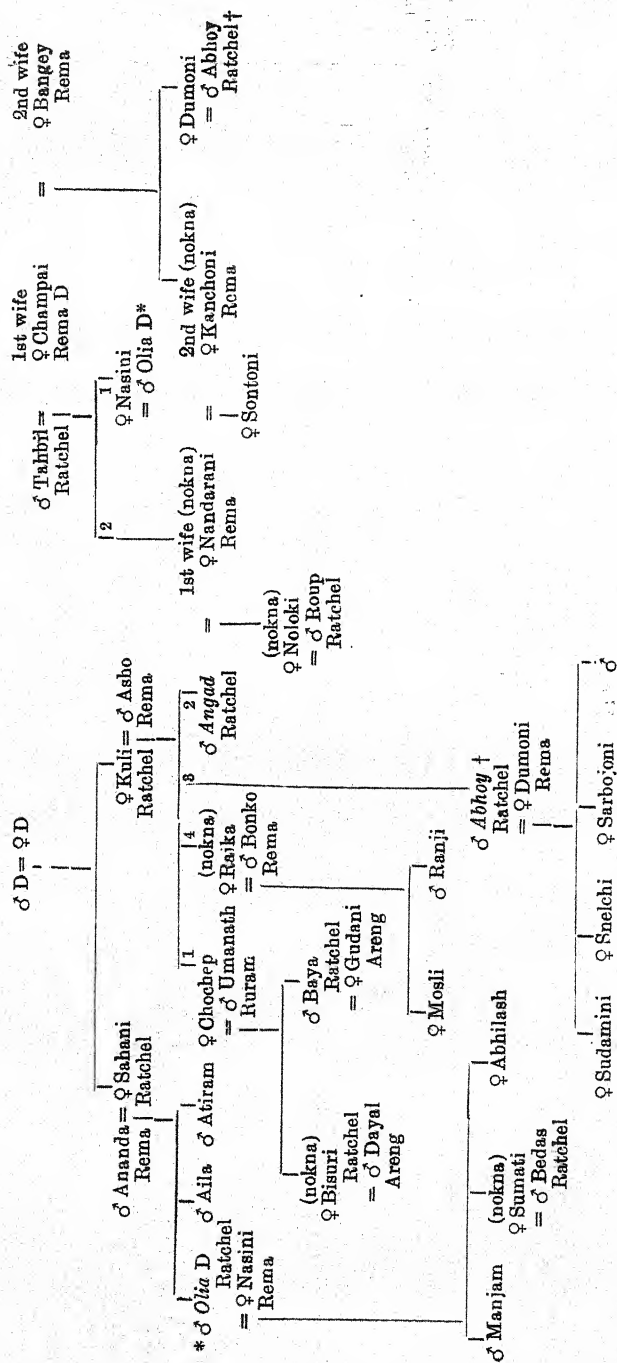
♂ Adhang = ♀ .....  
Pantra D | Deo D

TABLE 17

Bara Kanika,  
Durgapur,  
Angad and Abhoy



\* Same person.

+ Same person.

TABLE 18  
Along Garo

Bhabanipore Village,  
Sonaram Momin.

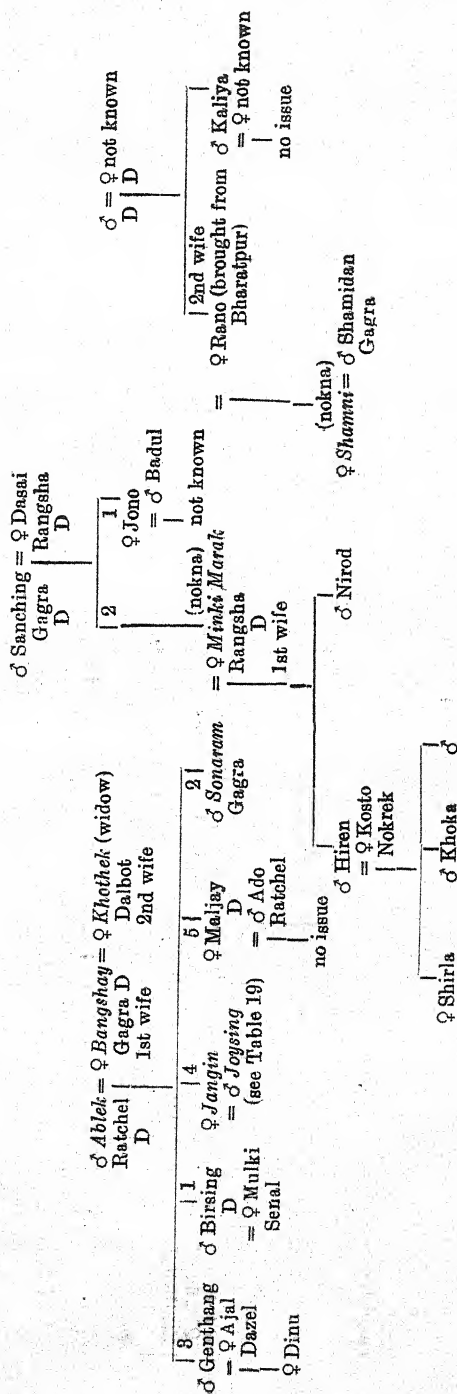




TABLE 19

## Along Garo

Songdhanpore, Bhabanipore Village,  
Jaysingh.

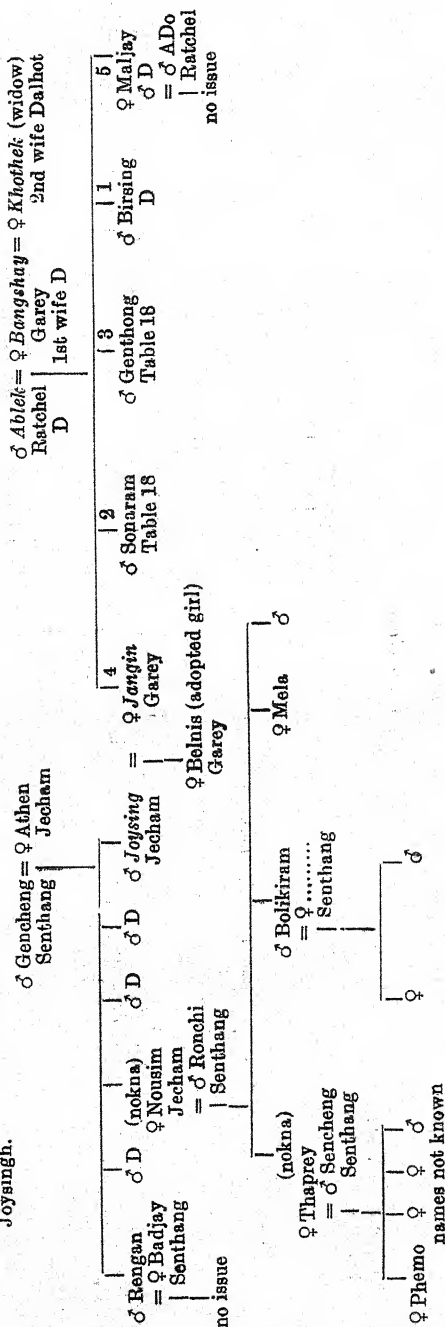
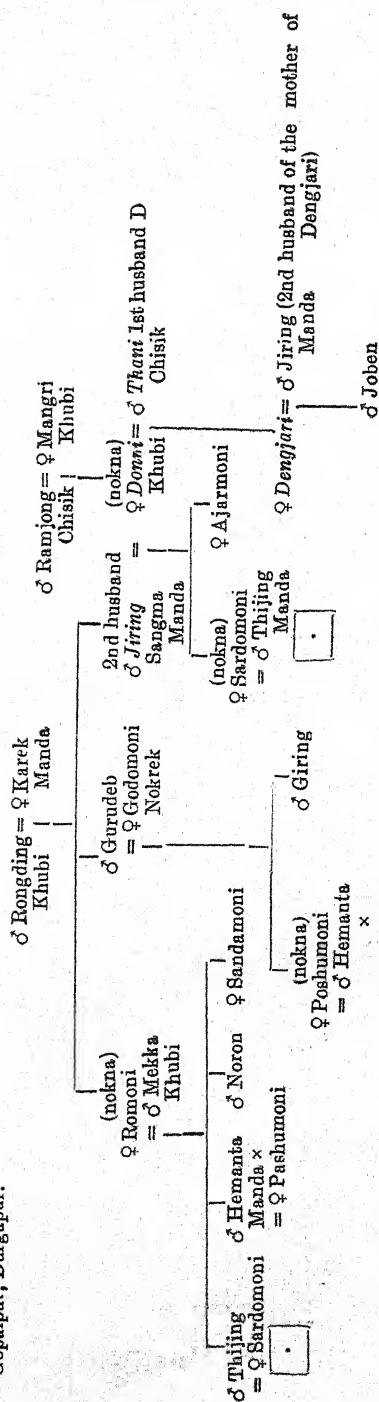


TABLE 20

## Abeng

Jiring Sangma,  
Gopalpur, Durgapur.



x Same person.

□ Same person.



TABLE 22

*Atong*

Oktilok (Christian), Pharangpara.

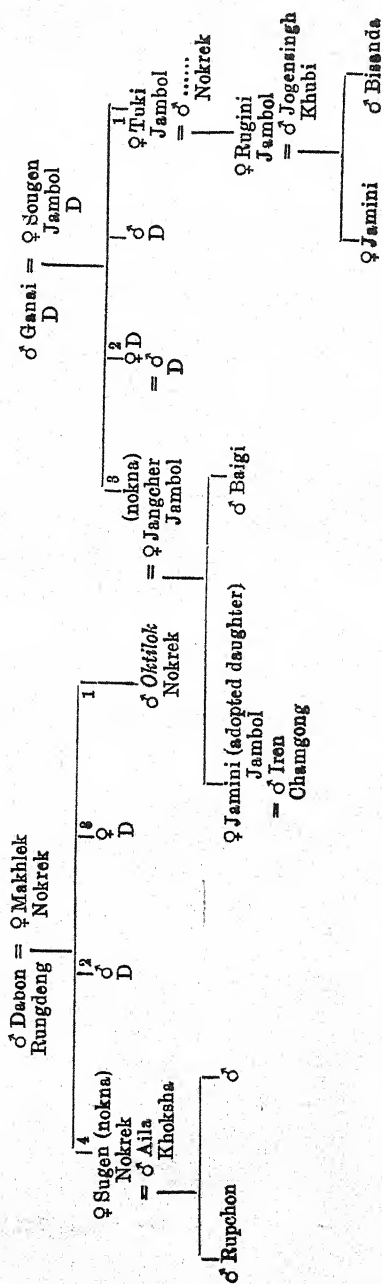
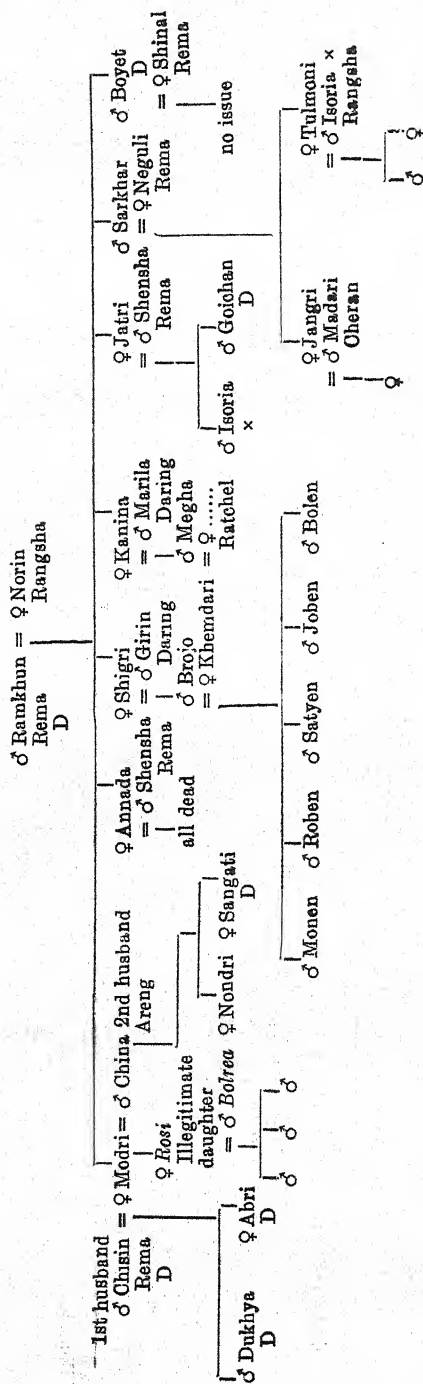


TABLE 23

*Brag (Abeng)*

Uthrail, Durgapur, Girin (non-Christian).



x Same person.

TABLE 24

Kharas Village, Durgapur, Ramdayal (non-Christian).

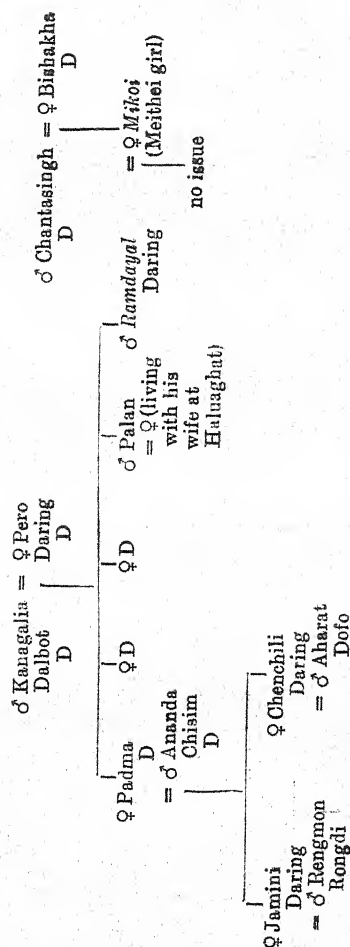
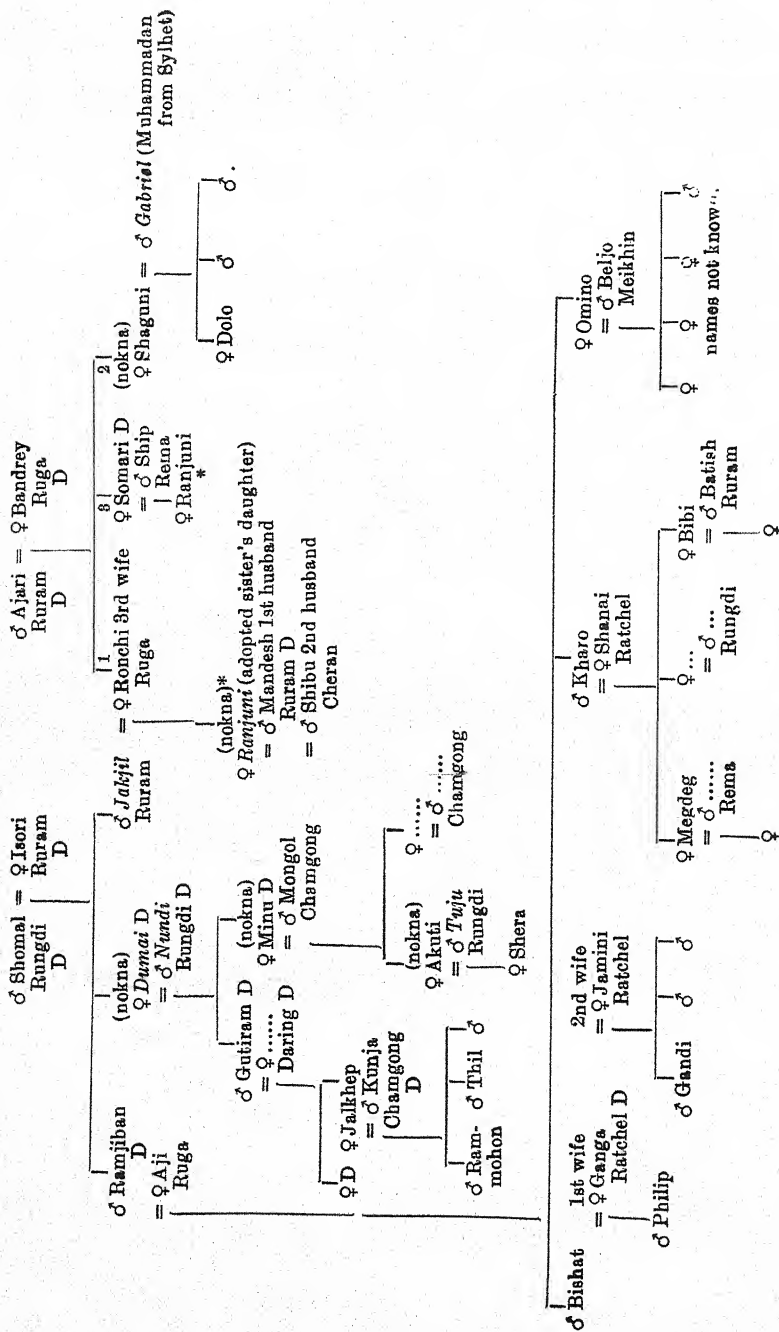


TABLE 25

Kamarkhali, Jakjil (non-Christian).



\* Same person.



# SEDENTARY GAMES OF RAJBANGSIS

BY

BISWAPADA DASGUPTA, M.Sc.

## INTRODUCTION

In the course of my work among the Rajbangsi tribe of North Bengal in 1939 I had an opportunity of observing and collecting some types of sedentary games prevalent among the members of the tribe of Thakurgaon Sub-division. Not all of the games of my collection are of new types, and some of them have already been recorded in other provinces of India. My aim is to show the existence of these games in the province of Bengal. They occur under names different from those of similar games of other provinces. I have also noted down the variations in procedure of these games of Bengal and the other provinces.

### KAUA THOKRA

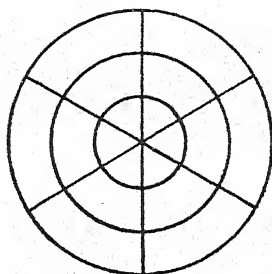


FIG. 1

The figure represents the diagram of the game and consists of three concentric circles with three common diameters. The diameters meet the circles in 18 different points. Two players are required to play the game; 9 intersecting points on three

contiguous radii belong to each of them. Each player provides himself with 9 pieces of some hard substance like broken brick and places them at those points belonging to him. The centre is the only vacant point and the first move of the piece is made by one of the players to this point. The game now proceeds, each player alternately making a move. The pieces can be moved along the diameters and along the arcs of the circumferences of the respective circles.

The aim of each player is to capture the opponent's pieces with his own. This is done by jumping over the piece of the adversary if the intersecting point immediately next to it is vacant (the pieces thus being moved not only along the diameter but also along the arcs of the circumferences of the circles); if a player in this way can capture all his opponent's pieces he wins the game.

This game is exactly the same as the game described by late Prof. H. C. Dasgupta, as prevalent in the Chapra district of Behar and known as Pretoã.<sup>1</sup>

There is a great similarity between this game and the two other Indian games—Gol-ekuish<sup>2</sup> prevalent in C.P. as described by late Prof. Dasgupta and Bāraguṭi<sup>3</sup> in Patna district described by Mr. C. C. Das-gupta.

The points of difference are that in Gol-ekuish the diagram consists of seven concentric circles with three common diameters and in Bāraguṭi the diagram consists of three concentric circles with four common diameters; but in the game described by me as in the case of Pretoã the diagram consists of three concentric circles with three common diameters.

In a note on Pretoã Mr. Hora<sup>4</sup> observes "I was also informed that sometimes the game is played with 12 pieces and in that case there are four instead of three concentric circles."

<sup>1</sup> Journal. Proc. A. S. B. Vol. XXVII, 1931, pp. 209-210.

<sup>2</sup> J.A.S.B., (N.S.) Vol. 20, 1924, pp. 163-67.

<sup>3</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. I, 1935.

<sup>4</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. XXVII, 1931, pp. 212.

If the game of Kāuā-ṭhokra described here is taken as standard the other games may be said to be variations of it, the rules in each case being the same. The variations are only in the nature of increase in the number of diameters, or of the circles, or of both.

Co PATI

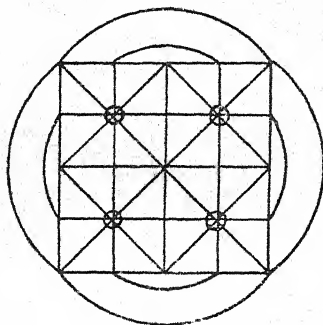


FIG. 2

The figure shows the diagram of the game. It is played by two players. Each player is provided with 15 ballets. Of these 7 pieces are placed at the point within the circle on the left diagonal, and 8 pieces on the point within the circle on the right diagonal, both of the points being on the second straight line in the rectangle on his side. The pieces can be moved as before on the lines and on the arcs; the usual rule of moving on and capturing the pieces goes on. The player who can capture all the opponent's pieces will win the game.

Bāgh-Bogri :

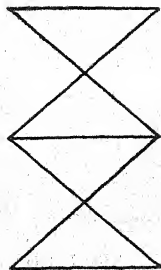


FIG. 3

The figure represents the diagram of the game. A player arranges his three goats on the three corners of the first triangle of the diagram on his side and his opponent places his tiger at any remaining intersecting point of the diagram. The possessor of the tiger makes his first move and the goat follows and this goes on alternately. This time the moving is done along the straight lines. The tiger tries to eat the goat which can be done by jumping over it to the immediately next vacant point in the same straight line; the possessor of the goats tries to imprison the tiger.

Cokor-cāli :

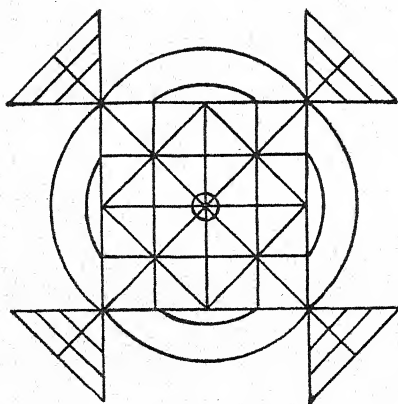


FIG. 4

The figure represents the diagram of the game. Two players are required to play the game. Each player arranges his 28 pieces of tamarind seeds at all the intersecting points in half of the board including those of the two triangles on his side; only the central line is left vacant. The central point of the rectangle bounded by a circle is the point where no piece will be allowed to enter, it is kept vacant all the time. This time the pieces can be moved along the straight lines and also along the two arcs drawn at each side of the rectangle.

Each player thus goes on moving his own piece alternately and tries to capture his opponent's piece by jumping over it to

the next point if vacant either along the straight lines or along the arcs. He wins the game who can thus capture all the pieces of his adversary.

Kharam Pāiṭ :

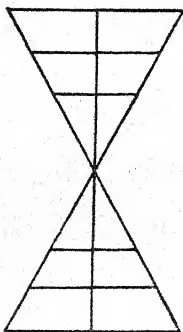


FIG. 5

The figure shows the diagram required to play the game. Two players are required to play it. This game is exactly similar to that of the game of Nāo-Guṭi recorded by Mr. C. C. Dasgupta in the Province of Behar at Kumrahar near Patna<sup>1</sup> and to the game of Lāu-Kāṭā-Kāṭi in the Lower Bengal recorded by Mr. Datta.<sup>2</sup>

Each of the players places his 9 pieces of “Ghuṭi” at the intersecting points of his respective triangle, the meeting point of the vertices of the triangles of the respective players remaining vacant. One of the players then removes his piece at this vacant point and the game proceeds on each player alternately moving on his own pieces. Each player tries to capture his adversary’s piece by jumping over it to an immediately next vacant point. The player who can capture all the pieces of the adversary wins the game.

<sup>1</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. I, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. XXIX, 1933, p. 168.

Koṭimuñjā :

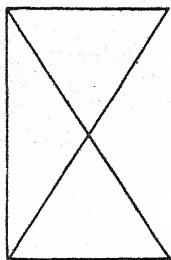


FIG. 6

Two players are required to play the game. Each player provides himself with two tamarind seeds and places them at the terminal intersecting points of the diagram on his side. Now as usual the moving of pieces goes on along the straight lines alternately by each player; this time each of the players tries to checkmate the two pieces of his adversary by his own and the player who can do this first wins the game.

This is a new type of game and has not been recorded before.

Dc-Bāghā :

T

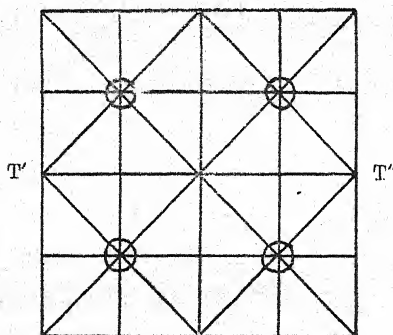


FIG. 7

In diagram and in rule the game is similar to that of Bāgh-bāṭṭi described by late Prof. H. C. Dasgupta prevalent in British Garhwal.<sup>1</sup>

It only differs in having 22 pieces of "ballets" instead of 20 pieces required in the case of Bāgh-bāṭṭi. In Bāgh-bāṭṭi the

<sup>1</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. XXIII, 1927, p. 297.

pieces are placed in groups of 5 at the points enclosed by the circles at the very beginning of the game and the two tigers are placed at T' and T".

In the case of the game observed by me 22 pieces are required ; of these 6 pieces are placed in each of the two circles on one of the diagonals and 5 pieces are placed in each of the two circles on the other diagonal ; also the two tigers are placed at the points T' and T.

In the case of the game of Sher-Bākar described by late Prof. Dasgupta the diagram and the rules are the same ; but 19 pieces are required for the game. Three of the circles have 5 pieces each and the fourth circle gets 4 pieces.

Mention may be made of another identical game of Bāgh-Bandi recorded by Mr. J. M. Datta<sup>1</sup> where 26 pieces are required to play the game.

The general rule of capturing pieces by the tigers in this game described above is as follows. If the tiger jumps over a circle with more pieces than one and occupies the immediately next vacant point in the same straight line only one piece will be captured. If there is only one piece at any point, and there is a vacant space behind it, while a tiger is on the other side, it can be taken by the tiger. The possessor of the tigers thus moves on, both the tigers aiming to capture the pieces whereas the possessor of the pieces moves the pieces aiming to checkmate both the tigers one after the other.

Naya-ghar-puran :

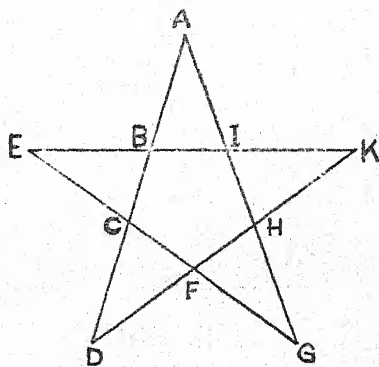


FIG. 8

<sup>1</sup> J.A.S.B., XXIX, N. S., p. 169.



The diagram represents the figure of the game ; only one player is required to play the game ; it is a kind of solitaire. The player provides himself with nine tamarind seeds which he will have to place at the nine intersecting points in the figure one by one thus :—

A point is selected on the diagram. The player then takes a piece and places it at a point third from this vacant point in the same straight line. This starting point is filled up by a second piece counting from another vacant point in the same straight line third from it ; this process is continued till the nine intersecting points of the diagram out of ten are filled up with nine pieces.

The pieces may be placed at those intersecting points by moving them in these ways respectively :

DCB̄, HFD̄, AIH̄, CBĀ, GFC̄, IHḠ, EBĪ, FCĒ, KHĒ.

The points marked overhead are those where the pieces are placed.

In a game 'Lām-Turki' recorded by Mr. Hora in the Teesta Valley<sup>1</sup> the actual game consists of two stages. The first one is similar to that of the game described here.

The second stage of the game consists in removing, one by one, all the pieces but one from the diagram following the usual rule of capturing of one piece by the other, by jumping over the piece to be captured to the immediately next point if vacant in the same straight line.

The second stage of the game is absent not only in the game described here but also in the similar game of Nao-Gutiā-Baiṭhānekā recorded by Mr. C. C. Dasgupta at Kumrahar in Behar.<sup>2</sup>

It is an interesting fact to be noted that the second stage of the game of Teesta Valley described by Mr. Hora is absent not only in Behar but also in such a neighbouring place like Thakurgaon, situated in the same part of Bengal.

<sup>1</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. XXIX, 1933, pp. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> J.A.S.B., Vol. I, 1925.

# THE CULT OF MAGDESVARI

BY

S. B. DASGUPTA, M.Sc.

## INTRODUCTION

The Buddhists and Hindus of Chittagong worship the deity Magdesvari with some peculiar rites. Among the Hindus it is mostly the non-Brahmin castes that worship this goddess, and in the regular rites a Brahmin priest is not employed. No image of the goddess is made at the time of the worship, neither can any be found in the area where this cult is prevalent. In a few rare cases Brahmins are also found to offer worship to Magdesvari, but this practice is of comparatively recent origin.

Of late rapid changes appear to have occurred in the rites and beliefs of this cult, both among the Hindus and the Buddhists. The former are bent upon linking this deity with the regular deities of the Hindu pantheon, and the latter, with advance of education and culture, show a distinct tendency to be more true to the tenets of Buddhism and hence are giving up some of the most interesting traits of the worship which involve animal sacrifice.

The magico-religious rites and practices associated with the worship of Magdesvari have been termed, in this article, a cult in so far as they touch more fields than the mere worship of Magdesvari.

As a native of Chittagong I have been familiar with the peculiar rites of the Magdesvari Cult from my boyhood. I have personally witnessed the worship of Magdesvari from beginning to end on many occasions and have seen a Magdesvari Hât being conducted in a neighbouring house in my village. Of late I have supplemented my earlier memories by scientific observation,

During the months of September and October, 1938, I carried out some investigations about this cult in the villages Guzara-Noapara, Fatehabad, Sikarpur and Saroatali to subject my knowledge to test and also to supplement it with further details. Of the Hindus among many male and female informants my chief informant was one Romesh Chandra De, who has, as he said, so far officiated as the chief Sevait in no less than sixty Magdesvari Sevās while my important Buddhist informant was Ram Chandra Barua of the village Noapara. Many facts with regard to the traditions, beliefs and customs were obtained from elderly women folk of the villages.

### DESCRIPTION

The cult of Magdesvari may be divided into :—

- (a) worship of Magdesvari or Magdesvari Sevā as it is called, and
- (b) Magdesvari Hāt.

### MAGDESVARI SEVĀ

(As practised by the Hindus)

Magdesvari Sevā is held at midday on a Saturday or a Tuesday of any month; but the Bengalee month *Bhādra* is held as the most proper for the purpose. It should be remembered that this *Sevā* is not a periodical function but an occasional one. No special stress is laid whether it is to be held in the darker or the lighter half of the month. Sevā cannot, however, be performed if the family is suffering from ceremonial uncleanness from death or child-birth.

As a rule offerings are made when a woman becomes pregnant and the time preferred is the fifth, sixth or the seventh month of pregnancy. At the time of the birth of the first child a *Sevā* is deemed very

essential. A Magdesvari Sevā can also be held when the housewife of the family takes a vow to that effect, for propitiating the goddess when any member of the family, especially any of her children or grandchildren suffers from any trouble such as a serious disease. When such a vow is taken five cowrie shells are kept separate in the name of the goddess Magdesvari. These are required at the time of the actual *Sevā* on a subsequent day.

The offerings are made at a place called *Sevā Kholā* which is generally situated by the roadside on the outskirts of the village or hamlet. Usually every hamlet has its own *Sevā-Kholā* and some times even more than one. A *Sevā-Kholā* is never situated within the precincts of the residential quarters. Generally a family makes its offerings at a particular *Sevā-Kholā* which may be situated at a greater distance than another which may be quite near the house. But they cannot change the place linked up with the family traditions for fear that the goddess may not accept the offering made at a new place. The *Sevā-Kholā* is a small spot about six feet square, which is cleansed at the time of the *Sevā* by clearing the grass with a hoe. It is an open spot which may be recognised by the remnants of any previous *Sevā* performed there.

As stated before no Brāhmin is required to officiate at such a performance. The officiants are usually three men, hailing, generally from the lower ranks of Hindu society, one of whom must be a person who has undergone his initiation (*Diksā*) ceremony from the family preceptor (*Kula Guru*). The initiated one acts as the chief priest and the other two act as his helpers. Sometimes, in the case of certain families, the number of these assistants increase up to as many as ten.

A black she-goat, a newly made basket made of bamboo strips, a new earthen pot, an old used basket, a bundle of dry bamboo sticks, a *dāh*, a broken piece of pottery for burning incense, a stone muller, a stone plate containing raw (green) turmeric, cumin seed,

coriander seed, pepper, chilli, onion, salt, a small packet of vermilion powder, mustard oil, two bamboo pieces chiselled in the shape of darts, each gradually ending in a sharp end; four small posts of *Keran* branches, five cowrie shells, five *Poās* (poā—about half pound) of uncooked *Atap* rice, three plaintain leaves and several red *Jaba* (*Hibiscus*) flowers and *Tulsi* (*ocimum sanctum*) leaves, are the articles needed for the worship.

The three men to officiate as priests in the performance of the *Sevā* have to fast from the morning of the day of worship. Other taboos such as those on sex relations have not been found to exist. At about noon the priests assemble at the house of the person for whose sake the *Sevā* is to be performed. One of them begins to make a basket, from bamboo strips, of size, roughly one and half feet square, with four loops, to act as hand-holds, on the edges of the four sides of the basket. A spot in the courtyard is previously cleansed with cowdung and mud for the animal sacrifice and other initial work connected with the worship to be carried out there. The black she-goat, which is previously purchased for the purpose,—an all black one is preferred,—is then taken by the three priests or *Sevāits*, as they are locally called, to the nearest pond or river. They all bathe there and make the goat also bathe with them. The goat is then carried in the arms of one of the *Sevāits*, all in wet cloths, and kept in the cleansed portion of the courtyard. Next the person for whose sake the offerings are to be made is seated in the courtyard facing south and water is poured on his head by one of the *Sevāits* from a pot. The drained water from the head is allowed to fall on the four feet of the goat which are held together by another *Sevāit* raising the goat in his arms. Vermilion marks are then put on the forehead, spine and ears of the goat and it is then garlanded with *Jabā* flowers.

The next item consists in the arrangement of the offerings in the newly made basket. Three plantain leaves are placed on the basket covering its base as also to some extent its sides. Five *Poās* of washed *Atap* rice are then heaped carefully in the

middle; and round the heap *Jabā* flowers are placed encircling and almost covering the heap of rice, the top being exempt. The five cowrie shells, which have been kept apart at the time of taking the vow for offering worship to Magdesvari, as noted before, are then taken out and put in a corner of the basket.

When the sun is just overhead the basket containing the offerings is placed at a convenient spot in the cleansed portion of the courtyard. The goat is held upside down by the four legs, two in each hand, over the basket, by one of the *Sevāits*. The head of the goat is directed southwards. The chief *Sevāit* next takes three *Tulsi* leaves drenched in water and drops them one by one on the goat muttering each time *Magdesvari Devyāya Nama*, salutations to the goddess Magdesvari, (reproduced as actually muttered by my informant). Then facing west he takes hold of the face of the goat with his left hand and holding a sharp *dāh* by his right severs off the head of the goat by rubbing the sharp edge of the *dāh* several times against the throat of the goat. The blood that oozes out at the time of cutting off the head is let fall on the heap of rice in the basket; and then after separating the head the streaming blood is collected in a new earthen pot. The severed head is then placed on the top of the heap of rice which was not covered with *Jabā* flowers. The skin is next opened transversely at the middle of the spine with the *dāh* and pulled apart from front and back. Each part of the skin is then left attached to a pair of legs on its side. The legs are now cut off from the rest of the body. The entrails are collected in an old used basket. Turmeric and other spices are then made into a rough paste on a stone plate (and not on a metate) with the help of a muller. It is interesting to note that a metate is not used by the Buddhists of Chittagong in their household affairs; they use the pestle and mortar in its stead.

Pieces of flesh are cut off from all parts of the skinned carcass, such as thigh, flanks, etc.; the lung and the heart are specially included; and they are pierced with the two bamboo darts. These



bits of flesh, on the two sticks are then treated with the paste of the spices and mustard oil and roasted on a fire made by burning a bundle of dry bamboo sticks, until the meat nearly turns black. The darts with the roasted meat are placed in the basket on the two opposite sides of the rice heap. A wick of cotton is then soaked in mustard oil, lit and placed on the head between the horns of the slaughtered animal in the basket. The two pieces of skin with a pair of legs attached to each, are placed in the basket on two opposite sides of the rice heap so that the parts of the legs attached to the skin hang over the outer side of the basket. The entrails are taken in the old basket. Sometimes the skins also are taken in the same basket along with the entrails. After this every one present on the spot, (that is in the courtyard) bows down on the ground facing the basket and then turns his back towards the basket for a few seconds. This is done as the goddess Magdesvari is believed to appear at the spot in spirit that moment to accept the offerings.

The next step is to carry these things to the *Sevā Kholā*. The chief priest carries the basket containing rice, roasted meat and the head of the goat on his head and his associates help in carrying the basket holding the entrails, the earthen pot containing blood, a bundle of dry bamboo sticks and the other things that are needed at the *Sevā Kholā*. These have been enumerated before. On reaching the sacred spot one of the *Sevāits* fixes four posts of *Keran* branches on the ground each of which has a fork from which the basket containing rice, the head of the goat and other offerings is hung by the four loops described before. The basket is so placed that the head of the sacrificed goat faces South. The basket containing the entrails and the pot containing blood are then placed on the ground below the hanging basket. The dry bamboo sticks are then burned. Sometimes an earthen lamp filled with mustard oil is lit and placed by the side of the basket and incense burnt on burning charcoal in a broken piece of



pottery. The chief *Sevāit* then takes three *Tulsi* leaves drenched in water and drops them one after another on the back edge, i.e., the northern rim, of the basket, himself standing immediately to the north of the basket, facing south with the basket just in front, muttering each time *Maddesari Debyāya Nama*, (salutations to goddess Maddesari). The party then bows at the *Sevā Kholā* and moves to a little distance and waits. There is no rule that the person for whose sake the offerings are made or any of his family must accompany the party to the *Sevā Kholā*. Women folk are not generally allowed to join the party on such occasions.

It is the belief of the people of Chittagong that at such time goddess Magdesvari enters in spirit into some creature such as a vulture, a crow, a dog, or a fox, which then appears and eats the offerings. Unless and until some one of the aforesaid creatures comes and begins to partake of the offered articles the *Sevāits* cannot return home. If there be any delay in any such living being eating the offerings it is taken to be a bad omen. It may be that there might have been something wrong in the procedure or that some one of the family was not agreeable to incur so much expenses for the worship. In the last case, and this happens in a very few cases among lower class people, the crime of such sacrilege falls generally on the son's wife of the head of the family, and she is given a good thrashing whereupon it is expected that the goddess will be pleased and will accept offerings through the agency of one of the aforesaid creatures. As soon as some such being begins to eat the offered food the party heralds the news by shouting to the members of the family who have been anxiously waiting so long to hear the good tidings. The latter then remove all the articles from the courtyard and cleanse the place so that the party of *Sevāit* may not see any thing left at the place when they return. Unless the news is heralded that the offerings are being eaten by some creature mentioned above nothing can be touched or removed from the

courtyard. It is taken to be a happy sign if a vulture or a fox eats the offerings.

The remaining flesh of the sacrificed animal is then cooked and feasted upon, the three *Sevāits* being essential members of that party. None, especially none of the *Sevāits*, can take any food until the meat is cooked. It is also a rule that the whole of the meat must be eaten at the same meal and that no portion of it can be saved for the next meal.

There are some changes and variations in the rites of the worship. In some families it is customary that the sacrifices and offerings should be made twice: once at midday as described above and again at dead of night. The creature sacrificed at night is usually a duck. The other features are almost similar to those that are followed at the offerings at midday. Everything connected with the worship in this case must be finished before day-break.

Again there are families which have to do everything connected with the worship, at the *Sevā Kholā*. The *Sevāits* bathe and sacrifice the goat, offer worship to the goddess and after the same is accepted by Magdesvari the remaining portion of the sacrificed animal is cooked and eaten also at the *Sevā Kholā*. Nothing is done within the precincts of the family quarters.

One family has a tradition that all the people that happen to pass by the *Sevā Kholā* at the time of offering the *Pujā* have to be invited and fed on the cooked meat at the *Sevā Kholā*.

In some cases duck-eggs usually 21 in number, are arranged in a circle on the heap of rice in addition to the *Jabā* flowers.

Some families again offer cooked rice instead of uncooked *Ātap* rice in the basket. All these differences are accounted for by the people simply by the argument that they are done in accordance with the family traditions. But they are apparently not of much importance as the essential rites are the same.

A very strange type of Magdesvari Sevā is known as Kāl Sevā. This Sevā is to be performed not in the day-time but at dead of night. The particular name has been derived from *Kal*, a small female effigy of plantain shoot made to human form with the help of a knife and by wrapping rags and jute, dyed black, on the body and head to represent cloth and hair respectively. This is done by a medicine man who is known as *Baidya*. This man may hail either from the Buddhist or the Hindu community. He plays an important part, as will be found later, in the other part of the Magdesvari cult—the Magdesvari Hāt.

This man, the *Baidya* as he is called, comes in the evening and prepares the effigy muttering incantations all the while. At about mid-night the offerings are made at the *Sevā Kholā*, the details concurring with those described in the usual practice at the midday performances, with this exception that everything is done at the *Sevā Kholā*; and that the effigy is fixed immediately to the north of the basket containing the offered articles and facing south. As can quite well be conceived the creatures that are supposed to be possessed by the spirit of Magdesvari for eating the offerings are in this case nocturnal animals such as jackals.

A Kāl Sevā is taken recourse to generally when a woman in her pregnancy is thought to be possessed by an evil spirit such as *Kālmir*. Evidence of such spirit possession is given out by many abnormal symptoms such as suffering from hallucination or becoming morose and muttering to herself.

Some families have Hinduised the deity Magdesvari to a great degree. They now call in a Brahmin, the usual family priest, who does not mind officiating in a ceremony which increases his income to a little extent. But he is careful to make the necessary additions and alterations to the usual rites in this worship to give the deity and the cult a more Hindu appearance. Thus the *Sālgrām* is worshipped at first, as is customary in all the Hindu *Pujās* and

then begins the worship of Magdesvari. The mantras that are uttered at this time are very interesting as they clearly make one understand that a *Kālī*, Magdeswari by name, is being worshipped. A passage copied by me from a manuscript text in corrupt Sanskrit detailing the rules and mantras of Magdesvari *Pujā*, written by an ingenious Brahmin in 1343 B.S., (=1936 A.D.) reads “*Magadhantu samudbhūtām bhuvalakṣaṇadehajām aṭṭāṭṭahāsavadanām jihvālalanabhīṣaṇām pralayānanadhūmrākṛtām gabhīrodaranābhikām sūrpākṛti-padadvayām salākāṅgulī śobhitām dhyāyenmagadhatām devīm varam trailokyamātaram...*” According to the above text, one should meditate upon the great goddess Magdesvari, the mother of the three worlds who had her origin in the country of Magadha, born of the body of signs of the Universe(?), having a terrifying laugh in her great and horrifying face with the tongue lolling out, of the colour of smoke, having a deep navel and having the two feet of the shape of the winnowing fan, and slender fingers of the shape of skewers. As is quite evident this would better fit a description of one of the varied forms of the Hindu goddess *Kālī*.

After finishing this worship comes the sacrifice of the animal. Here, in place of a she-goat a black he-goat is substituted and the same is slaughtered with the Hindu sacrificial knife (*Khadga*) on the sacrificial sticks (*hārkaṭh*) by a single blow in the ordinary Hindu form. So far the Brahmin performs the worship in accordance with the usual Hindu practice; but after this step the three *Sevāits* come on the stage and skin the slaughtered beast, prepare the offerings in the newly made basket, as is the case with the regular Magdesvari *Sevā* and offer the same at the *Sevā Kholā*. Thus the Brahmin is deprived of one thing—the head of the sacrificed animal which is, at least in Chittagong to my knowledge, the perquisite of the officiating Brahmin in all Hindu worship. When the offerings are arranged in the basket and are about to be carried to the *Sevā Kholā*, the Brahmin gives his final Hindu touch to the performance by chanting the following mantra (noted from the

manuscript text already referred to)—“*Idam pakvamāṣyā māsakhaṇḍarudhirasiddhataṇḍula-sameta-sapradīpaśirovalim magdheśvāryai devyai namaḥ.*” “These Pakvamāṣyā (?) and pieces of meat and blood with cooked rice, and (sacrificed) head with light (on the head) are offered to goddess Magdesvari; salutations to the Goddess.”

In the above two mantra-passages there are grammatical mistakes which show the lack of scholarship of the author who has sought to fit the mantras of a purely Hindu worship into an unorthodox rite.

That there has been a tendency to turn this strange deity into a new form of the Hindu goddess *Kālī* or some such goddess, is shown further by the fact that a temple has been erected adjoining a *Sevā Kholā* in the village Fatehabad which contains the image of a *Kālī* and has been given the name of Magdesvari *Kālī*. Regular worship on the lines of the Hindu rites is done to this Magdesvari *Kālī* and this is followed by the offering of roasted meat etc., at the *Sevā Kholā*. If the last part of the rites are totally dropped in time, only a regular *Kālī* worship will remain and the deity will be completely Hinduised.

The Buddhists worship Magdesvari in almost the same way as the Hindus according to the regular older practice and not according to the modern changed methods. But there are certain differences. Thus the number of *Sevāits* is generally not less than seven and everything is done at the *Sevā Kholā*. The *Sevāits* do not chant any *mantra*. They simply bow down at the place after having done everything at the *Sevā Kholā* as noted before, in order that the goddess may appear through the agency of the creatures mentioned before and partake of the offering; they then go away to a little distance. In the spices ginger is specially avoided and “ghee” is not used. The spices are made into a paste in a metal cup with the help of a small pestle.

In recent times there has been a move among these people that they as followers of Lord Buddha should give up animal



killing especially at a sacred performance. Hence at present if anybody takes a vow of offering Pujā to Magdesvari the person bathes at midday of a Tuesday or a Saturday, goes to the *Sevā Khola* and marks a spot with mustard oil and vermillion powder and bows down facing South. This finishes the business. But still in the less sophisticated areas the full rites with animal sacrifice are performed.

*Summary*—Before passing to the next part of the cult, the following notable features of the worship of Magdesvari may be summed up :—

1. Absence of Brahmin in the regular *Sevā*,
2. Sacrifice of a female animal.
3. Instead of chopping off the head of the animal by a single blow it is cut off by rubbing the sharp edge of the *dah* against the throat.
4. Offering of roasted meat, skin and entrails and blood of the animal to the goddess.
5. All the important acts in the course of the worship are done facing South.
6. Buddhists and Hindus both worship the deity in almost identically the same way.

#### MAGDESVARI HĀṬ

Another phase of the Cult is Magdesvari Hāṭ which is practised to ward off evil spirits. The main features of this ceremony lie in the medicine man or *Baidya* bringing about possession by the goddess Magdesvari of a person who is termed *Gāchā*. Hāṭs are usually arranged for when some woman, generally a pregnant young woman of the family, is believed to be possessed of some evil spirit. The most notorious of such spirits is the one *Kālmir*, mentioned before ; he is said to have a very dark complexion. There are also others in the list such as *Birsingha*, the white friend, who is said to be quite a gentle fellow.

A Hāṭ may be of many kinds, but generally two varieties are common ; the *Chitā* or scattered Hāṭ which is concluded in a single day, and the more continuous type which unless a specific result is obtained is continued indefinitely.

A Hāṭ may be arranged for at any time of the year, on a Tuesday or a Saturday. In the case of the  
 Time second type of Hāṭ, which also has to be started on a Saturday or Tuesday, if the desired results are not obtained on the first day, the ceremonies may be continued on the following days. No Hāṭ is continued for the whole day. It is held at four times during the day (a) at the very early dawn, (b) at midday, (c) at dusk and (d) at mid-night for approximately an hour each time.

The *Chitā Hāṭ* is arranged within some room of the dwelling  
 Place house ; whereas the other type of Hāṭ is almost always held in the courtyard and rarely (when it fails in its object at first) at the *Seva Kholā*.

The Hāṭ is arranged by heaping uncooked *Ātap* rice on plantain leaves around which, in a rectangular form, duck-eggs (seven, nine, eleven, sixteen or twenty-one as the case may be), are placed and red *Jabā* flowers added in good numbers. In front two plantain shoots are fixed in the ground on the two sides. In the *Chitā Hāṭ* the *Gāchā* usually sits facing east confronting the rice heap etc., while in the other type of Hāṭ the *Gāchā* sits facing south confronting the rice heap and other ceremonial objects.

As the *Gāchā* sits kneeling down and clasping the hands together, the *Bāīdyā* puts a red *Jabā* flower on the clasped hands ; this is to be held by the *Gāchā*. The *Bāīdyā* then sits by the side of the *Gāchā* and begins to beat a plate of bell-metal with two sticks which he holds in his hands, resting one side of the plate on his toes and the other side on the ground. Incantations are also uttered by him and are to the effect that Magdesvari is sometimes coaxed and sometimes vilified to appear before the *Gāchā*. Some of the words are



very significant as, "Come, Come, Mother ! Oh Mother Maghini (a female Magh) !" and "Oh, the daughter of Sona the Magh ! Come, come, appear Thou before the *Gāchā*." These expressions give clear indications of the real origin of the goddess.

The *Gāchā* begins shaking his head from side to side and occasionally exclaims, "I see the Mother Magdesvari but she is very far away," or "She refuses to come to the Hāṭ as such and such are the defects," or again "The Mother is hanging her red feet sitting on the branch of a *Shāro* tree at the *Sevā Kholā* and chewing betel leaves." The ordinary causes that prevent the goddess to appear at the Hāṭ are that the premises or the residential quarters of the family are under some magical influence of some *Baidya* and that some amulets may be found embedded in the ground at the south-east (*Agni Kon*) corner of the residential quarters. These have to be taken out so that the goddess may come. If this be not possible the Hāṭ should be transferred to the *Sevā Kholā* where the results of the performance are expected to be evident. At such time Magdesvari is said to speak through the mouth of the *Gāchā* that such and such spirit or *Pari* has got possession of the person suffering, and that such and such are the remedies. Sometimes the *Gāchā* gets an amulet in the hand given by Magdesvari. I was informed that a *Gāchā*, who was an illiterate person wrote pages in good English when provided with ink, pen and paper when so possessed. This was held to be proof positive that Magdesvari had really come. It was not, however, clear why the goddess wrote in English. All the people of the village muster strong on such occasions making good use of the tobacco and betel leaves hospitably offered by the affected family.

In a case noticed by me, a young married woman in a family was said to become frequently possessed by the spirit of Magdesvari at midday or dusk or sometimes in the early dawn when she used to dance and shake her head. Often taking a red *Jabā* flower in her hand she used to proceed to the *Sevā Kholā* dancing all the while. People from far and near thronged round her and

brought with them milk and fruits to offer at the *Sevā Kholā* as that particular spot was deemed very sacred and dynamic owing to the frequent presence of the goddess. The woman held to be possessed by Magdesvari was looked upon with veneration and awe.

### CONCLUSION

The name Magdesvari suggests that it is a Sanskritic name derived from the roots "Magadha" and "Isvari." Magadha is the ancient name of South Behar. The pronunciation is, however, Magdesvari and not Magadhesvari. The suggestion that the goddess is of Hindu origin, is belied by the rites in all their features.

The Buddhists of Chittagong are locally termed Mags; and "Mag" may have some connection with "Magadha."<sup>1</sup> In the census of 1931<sup>2</sup> there is a reference to the claim by the Buddhists of Chittagong that they are the descendants of people who originally came from Magadha hundreds of years ago. It may, however, be also a purely tribal name which has survived.

Whether Magh is the original tribal name of the Chittagong Buddhists or whether it is derived from Magadha, it will not be wrong to associate this goddess with the primitive customs of non-Hindu and non-Buddhist people considering all the features of the Cult.

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Risley—The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Vol. II, 1891, (pp. 28-29).....Concerning the use and derivation of the name Magh there has been much discussion, and the question cannot be considered as having been finally settled. Wilson, followed by Ritter, Fr. Muller, and Colonel Yule, defines it as "a name commonly applied to the natives of Arakan particularly those bordering on Bengal or residing near the sea,—the people of Chittagong." Sir Arthur Phayre, quoted by Colonel Yule, derives the name from "Maga" the name of the ruling race for many centuries in Magadha (Modern Behar). See also the brief notes on the worship of Magdesvari in the District Gazetteer for Chittagong by L. S. S. O'Malley (Calcutta, 1908). The deity is suggested by Rai Bahadur Saratchandra Das to be a variant of the Mahāyana deity Arya Tārā.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Hutton—Census of India, Vol. I, Part I, p. 389 :—

"A colony of Buddhists in Chittagong, however, claims to represent the ancient Buddhist population of Magadha....."

As noted earlier the chief *Sevāit* in muttering the saluting mantras pronounced Maddesari in place of Magdesvari. This becomes more significant when we note that the Buddhists also call the deity Maddesari and not Magdesvari. Whether it is just a matter of simplified or crooked pronunciation and is not really a different name is not very easy to judge. Small hill streams are, however, called "*Chari*" in Chittagong, from which sometimes villages are named after adding the suffix "*Chari*." The Bengali 'Chh' is generally pronounced in Chittagong as a sibilant and sounds as 's.' So it may also be the name of a place where this cult may have originated or whence it has come to Chittagong proper. But it may also be argued that the "*Chari*" or "*Sari*" has been derived from "*Isvari*."

The non-Hindu character of the goddess becomes more and more pronounced when the peculiar features are taken one by one into consideration. Firstly in a regular Magdesvari *Sevā* a Brahmin priest is not required, and the Brahmin caste seldom shows any allegiance to this goddess. This could not have occurred if the deity had been originally a Hindu one.

Next the features that (1) a female animal is required to be sacrificed, (2) that this is done by rubbing the *dāh* against the throat, and (3) roasted meat, skin and entrails are given as offerings to a goddess are quite foreign to Hindu sentiment. A Hindu does not sacrifice a she-goat or any female animal to any deity. The slaughtering of the animal by rubbing a *dah* against the throat reminds one of the method by which the Mahomedans slaughter animals. As Chittagong has a predominating Muslim population one may naturally think of ascribing the origin of this practice to the Mahomedan custom. But the Mahomedans are stout non-believers of Magdesvari and hence it is not likely that a custom of a non-believing people would be borrowed specially in a religious rite.

There is a belief among the people that Magdesvari was the daughter of a Magh chief Sona by name, who had his dominion somewhere in Arakan in Burma. This lady later became

deified and was worshipped by the people. References based on this belief are made in the invocations at a *hāṭ* as noted before.

There is a minor fact which throws some light on the question. A metate is not taken help of for making a paste of the spices at the time of the *Sevā*. The Buddhists of Chittagong are characterised by the absence of the metate in their material culture. The Hindus, however, use it invariably. The exclusion of the metate for crushing the spices at the time of the *Seva* probably indicates its absence in the culture from which this religious rite has been borrowed by the Hindus in Chittagong.

From the discussions it is clear that a non-Hindu deity is in the process of being Hinduised. It is perhaps in some such ways that so many different female deities have got their way into the regular list of the Hindu deities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have to thank the Anthropology Department of the Calcutta University for encouragement in investigating this subject and help in bringing out this article.



# THE KHASI HUTS OF MAWPHLANG

BY

RAM KRISHNA MUKHERJEE, RAM CHANDRA BOSE, SALIL RAI  
CHAUDHURI, SAROJ GUPTA AND KUMARES SENGUPTA

Post-Graduate students of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta are expected to do a certain amount of field work for practical training. In 1940 a Khasi village was studied by us, the students of the Post-Graduate class, as part of our training, under the guidance of Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay, the Head of the Department of Anthropology, whom we have to thank also for the photographs used for this paper. This note on Khasi house structure is based on our work in the village of Mawphlang, the headquarters of the Khasi State of this name, in the Khasi Hills, Assam. Our studies included a survey of the village and its house types. Particular attention was paid to the structure of the old type of Khasi house.

Gurdon in his book on the Khasis of Assam describes the Khasi hut as elliptical in shape. But in Mawphlang we found that they can be more strictly said to be 'U'-shaped, in ground plan the bend of the 'U' being the front, the two parallel arms the sides, and a straight line connecting the two ends of the two arms of the 'U' the rear. We found this to be the type of most of the old houses of Mawphlang village. As is well known it is the custom among Khasis for the women of a family to live together, until the number of members increases so much that they cannot be provided with room in a single house. Then new houses are built. It is usual for a married couple with children to put up a separate



but for themselves. In all these cases the youngest daughter of the family who is known as the Ka Khadduh of the family must live in the old house and maintain the social and religious traditions of the family. In the village of Mawphlang we found that the houses of all the Ka Khadduhs like Ka Sadia, Ka Hosibon and others, and also the old house of the wife of U. Suburai, the myntri of the Mawphlang State, all belong to this 'U'-shaped type. This association of Ka Khadduhs and 'U' shaped huts suggests that this is the old type. The modern huts vary in their structure some being like modern bungalows common now-a-days in Shillong.

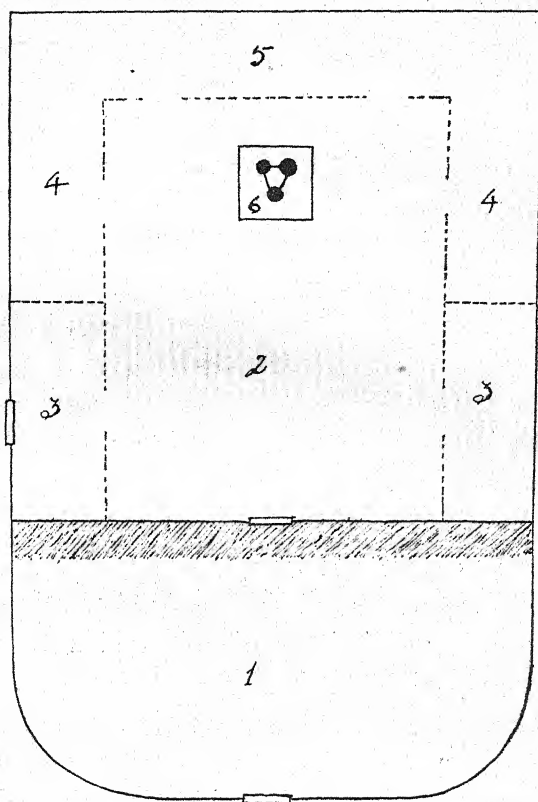
The old Khasi house, in general, can be described as follows :—

Generally there is a compound in front and a pigsty at one side, the whole site being enclosed by a fencing of reed and small plants or of wooden planks or some such material. The hut as observed from outside is elliptical in front and box-shaped behind (as seen in the diagram). It is 'U'-shaped in the ground plan. The roof of the hut is sloped on the two sides and spread out like a fan, in a semi-circle, in front.

The material used in the construction of the hut varies. In some of the old houses the walls were found to be made of blocks of stone with mud in the interstices serving the purpose of mortar. The roof had a bamboo frame covered with thatching grass. In other old huts the walls were not entirely made of stone blocks. In some we found the front portion made entirely of stone, the lower portions of the side and of the rear walls, up to a level of two to three feet, made of stone, the remaining portions being made of wooden planks or reeds covered with mud. In some modified huts again (either they were built later or the old huts were repaired) the entire rear wall except at the base and the upper portions of the sides were made of tinplates from used cans nailed to a frame. In some huts corrugated and galvanised iron sheets have been used. The material for the roof



also varies a good deal now-a-days, some being of corrugated galvanised iron sheets and others of flat tinplate sheets instead of



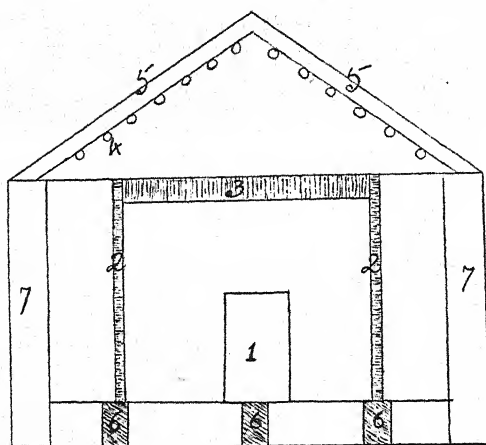
Ground plan

1. Ka Kyndur; 2. Ka Nympei;  
3. Ka Kynreim; 4. Ka ling Kyndong;  
5. Ka Rumpei; 6. Ka Dypei.

thatching grass. In some modified houses we found a porch added in front of the main door of the hut.

Entering the hut by the main door, the interior can be divided into two compartments, the front one which is on the ground level and the inner compartment which has a wooden floor raised to a height of about four feet supported on pillars of stone.

In some huts there is a wooden partition in between the two compartments, while in others it is absent. The front compartment



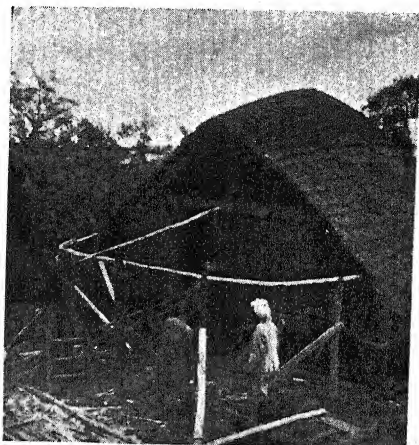
ELEVATION

1. Door; 2. Supporting pillar; 3. Bahtymphan  
4. U pyniar; 5. (Kynshi) & U bnoh; 6. Supporting  
pillar of wooden floor; 7. Outer walls.

ment on the ground floor is known in Mawphlang as Ka Kyndur, while the raised portion is known as Ka Nympei. The Ka Kyndur is smaller than the Ka Nympei and is roughly semi-circular in shape as it is formed of the front portion of the hut. Its floor is paved with stone or made of beaten earth. In some huts where there is a partition between the Ka Kyndur and the Ka Nympei, there is a raised shelf in the Ka Kyndur which is really the projection of the wooden floor of the Ka Nympei. From the Ka Kyndur the Ka Nympei is reached by means of a few steps made of stone or a short staircase of wood. Where there is a partition between the Ka Kyndur and the Ka Nympei there is a door in the middle of the wooden partition to enter the Ka Nympei.

The Ka Nympei is rectangular in shape and comprises about two-thirds of the area of the hut. The Ka Nympei is not a single compartment but is divided into smaller compartments at its two sides and the rear by means of low wooden partitions.

KHASI HUTS OF MAWPHLANG



Construction of the frame of the Ka Kyndur



Thatching the Ka Kyndur



But in some huts there are no such partitions and the demarcation is made by the pillars and beams which support the roof of the hut. The small enclosures at the two sides in the front portion are known locally as Ka Kynrein. The Ka Kynrein at the right hand side of the Ka Nympei close to the Ka Kyndur generally is used for storing water. The Ka Kynrein at the left hand side of the Ka Nympei just opposite to that for storing water is used as a larder for potatoes and other provisions. The enclosures at the rear of the Ka Nympei and those remaining at its sides are used as sleeping places. The sleeping places at the sides are known as Ka Iing Kyndong and those at the rear as Ka Rumpei. In most huts there is a window in the Ka Rumpei, high up in the back wall of the hut. In some huts there is a window in the front wall, in the Ka Kyndur. In many huts there is no window at all. Besides the main door in the Ka Kyndur, there is another door to the Ka Kynrein at the right hand side of the Ka Nympei. We were informed that in Cherra the part called Ka Kyndur is termed Ka Shyngkup, and Ka Kynrein as Ka Pyngshai.

In the centre of the Ka Nympei there is the hearth known as Ka Dypei. It is a rectangular space, about four feet and a half in length and three feet and a half in breadth, enclosed by fenders of wood. The floor of the hearth is paved with stone and mud. In the centre of it there are three small-shaped stone pieces which are known as Mawbyrsiew. On the Mawbyrsiew there is an iron triangle known as Ka Nar to hold the pots. The space of the Ka Nympei behind the hearth and in front of the Ka Rumpei is known as Jingbuhkhiewja.

Running round the edge of the Ka Nympei at a man's height there is a wooden frame supported on vertical posts; to this frame are fixed the partitions, separating the Ka Nympei from the Ka Kyndur, Ka Kynrein, Ka Iing Kyndong and Ka Rumpei. This wooden frame is known as Bahtymphan or Bahtympha. Just above the Bahtymphan several stout beams of wood cross the house from side to side and rest on the

Bahtymphan. They are known as Ukhung. The Ukhung above the Dypei are placed close to one another. A little apart from this row of Ukhungs, there is a single Ukhung parallel to the others which in some huts is hollowed out and is used as a receptacle for some household articles.

The frame of the roof as observed from inside consists of a central ridge pole running along the length of the hut and situated above the middle of it. From the ridge pole pairs of rafters diverge on two sides, their lower ends resting on the side walls of the hut. In front of the hut, the rafters are radially spread out from the anterior end of the ridge pole which is supported by a vertical pole known as Rijit. These rafters rest on semi-circular wall at the bend of the 'U'. The ridge pole and the rafters are known as Kynshi. Besides the rafters there are thinner wooden poles similarly arranged which further strengthen the frame of the roof. They are known as Ubnoh. The small rafters which are set cross-wise on the sloping Kynshi and form each series a 'U' round the ceiling are known as U Pyniar. This frame for the roof is made on those huts where thatching grass is used, that is, in the old type of huts. In modern huts where corrugated or flat sheets of iron have been used instead of thatching grass such a frame is not required.

In the village of Mawphlang, we saw an old type hut, of Ka Lita repaired and re-built. At first the raised rectangular portion of the hut, the Ka Nympei, was reconstructed on a raised platform, with the frame for the roof above it. Then a semi-circular area was taken in front of the Ka Nympei about one-third the area of the inner compartment. Simultaneously with the making of the frame of the Ka Kyndur, the thatch was made in sections in bamboo frames. Then the roof of the hut was covered with these sections which were arranged in overlapping sheets (see plate). An old type Khasi hut is about thirty feet long; it is about twenty feet wide at the back.

Reference has been made to the usual pigsty adjoining each house. It is generally a small thatched shed with walls made of

wood and grass matting. The shed may be partitioned into two compartments one for keeping the cows and the other for keeping pigs. The upper portion of the pigsty is used for storing fuel in some houses. There is no uniformity in respect of this shed.

All the 'U'-shaped huts found in the Mawphlang village were studied. Besides these typical 'U'-shaped huts there are many other huts in the village which are rather flattened in front and can be said to belong to the flattened 'U'-type. In the table given below the variations are shown in detail of the typical 'U'-type huts and also of a flattened 'U'-type hut belonging to Ka Labirmon of Lyngdoh clan. It is peculiar that all these huts have their main door facing north.

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Owner of the hut.</i>	<i>Materials used.</i>	<i>Peculiarities.</i>
I.	Ka Hosibon (Khar Hunai).	<p><i>Wall</i>—In front entirely of stone. Lower portions of sides and rear of stone.</p> <p>Upper portions of sides of wood, reed and mud.</p> <p>Upper portion of rear of thatch.</p> <p><i>Roof</i>—Thatched entirely.</p>	<p>Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei.</p> <p>No partition between Ka Nympei and its enclosures.</p>
II.	Ka Krin (Lyngdoh).	<p><i>Wall</i>—Wood with an outer cover of reed and thatch.</p> <p><i>Roof</i>—Thatching grass.</p>	<p>No partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei, and between Ka Nympei and its enclosures.</p>
III.	Ka Thaiup	<p><i>Wall</i>—Planks covered with thatch.</p> <p><i>Roof</i>—Thatched.</p>	<p>No partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei but the front Bahtymphan is present.</p>
IV.	Ka Pre (Lyngdoh).	<p><i>Wall</i>—Planks with outer thatchings. Very low stone wall all round, at the base.</p> <p><i>Roof</i>—Thatched.</p>	<p>No partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei.</p>
V.	Ka Li (Rani)	<p><i>Wall</i>—Low stone wall all round. Upper portions of front of reed and mud. Upper portions of side and rear of planks with outer cover of thatch.</p> <p><i>Roof</i>—Thatched.</p>	<p>Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei.</p>



<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Owner of the hut.</i>	<i>Materials used.</i>	<i>Peculiarities.</i>
VI.	Ka Iet (Khar Dumpep).	Wall—Front, sides, and lower portions of rear of stone. Upper portions of rear of flat tinned sheets. Roof—Thatched.	Same as above.
VII.	Ka Ke (Lyngdoh).	Wall—Front, sides, and lower portion of rear of stone. Upper portion of rear of flat tinned sheets. Roof—Thatched.	Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei. In front of the main door a porch has been added,—a two sloped tin shed resting on four wooden pillars.
VIII.	Ka Sadia (Iangblah).	Wall—Front and lower portions of sides and rear of stone. Upper portion of left wall of flat tinned sheets. Upper portions of right wall and rear of thatch. Roof—Thatched.	No partitions.
IX.	Ka Pren (Khar Hunai).	Wall—Front and lower portions of sides and rear of stone. Upper portions of sides of wood, bamboo, and mud. Upper portions of rear of thatch. Roof—Sloping sides of corrugated sheets. Front thatched.	Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei. No partition between Ka Nympei and its enclosures.
X.	Ka Kin (Iangblah).	Wall—Low stone walls all round. Roof—Thatched.	
XI.	Ka Krek (Rap Thap).	Wall—Front entirely of stone. Lower portions of sides and rear of stone, upper portions of planks. Roof—Flat tin plate.	Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei, and between Ka Nympei and its enclosures. One window in Ka Rumpei.
XII.	Ka Eiribon (Iangblah).	Wall—Stone all round. Roof—Corrugated iron sheets.	All the partitions present. Two windows at the bend of the 'U' by the two sides of the main door. One window at the back of Ka Rumpei at the left side of it.
XIII.	Ka Ko (Lyngdoh).	Wall—Lower portions of stone. Upper portions of sides of bamboo and mud. Upper portion of rear of tinned sheets. Roof—Tinplate.	No partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei.

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Owner of the hut.</i>	<i>Materials used.</i>	<i>Peculiarities.</i>
XIV.	Ka Shyrngeh (Lyngdoh).	<i>Wall</i> —Front, sides, and lower portions of rear stone. Upper portion of rear of flat tinned sheets. <i>Roof</i> —Corrugated sheets of iron.	Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei. A porch in front of hut similar to that in Ka Ke's hut.
XV.	Ka To (Lyngdoh)	<i>Wall</i> —Front and lower portions of sides of stone. Upper portions of sides of bamboo and mud. Rear almost entirely of flat tinned sheets. <i>Roof</i> —Entirely of flat tinplate.	
XVI.	Ka Pubon (Khar Dohling).	<i>Wall</i> —Front, sides, and lower portions of rear of stone. Upper portion of rear of flat sheets. <i>Roof</i> —Corrugated sheets of iron.	No partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei. No steps in Ka Kyndur to reach Ka Nympei. A small porch in front of main door as in the hut of Ka Ke.
XVII.	Ka Donbon (Lyngdoh.)	<i>Wall</i> —Lower portions of stone all round, upper portions of corrugated iron sheet <i>Roof</i> —Corrugated sheets of iron.	Small opening in the rear wall.
XVIII.	Ka Wer (Khar Wankher).	<i>Wall</i> —Same as above. <i>Roof</i> —Same as above.	
XIX.	Ka Kyrhen (Lyngdoh).	<i>Wall</i> —Low stone wall all round at the base. Upper portions of sides and front of corrugated sheets. Upper portion of rear of tinplate. <i>Roof</i> —of tinplate.	Partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei. Small porch in front of main door as mentioned in some huts previously.
XX.	Ka Labirmon (Lyngdoh).	<i>Wall</i> —Low stone wall all round. Upper portions of corrugated sheets. <i>Roof</i> —Corrugated sheets of iron.	No partition between Ka Kyndur and Ka Nympei.

It has already been said that the Khasi house type is now changing. Some such changes have been noted in the table, such as, the addition of a porch, the ground plan of one hut changing into a flattened 'U,' and the extensive use of flat or corrugated iron sheets in place of thatch. As mentioned previously besides these typical 'U'-type huts, in many other huts the bend of the 'U' in front has been flattened but the oval roof in front is present. This is quite common. In other modified

huts the ground plan is entirely rectangular. In this type of huts the materials used are also different, the corrugated sheets and wooden planks being more used than blocks of stone and thatching grass. The inner apartments, however, conform to the old plan. In the market place of the village there are some houses which are two-storied, the front of the ground floor of which have been utilised for shops. These houses do not at all conform to the old 'U'-type but are square or rectangular in ground plan. Near the market place there are three houses of well-to-do Khasis which resemble the bungalows of Europeans of Shillong (and of the Mission house at Mawphlang) in their structure and material. In these modern houses unlike the old ones the main door faces the street. The myntr U. Suburai who is one of the well-to-do persons of Mawphlang village has his old house (that is, the old house he put up for his wife after marriage) of the 'U'-type, the description of which has been given in the preceding table under the name of the owner, the wife of U Suburai, Ka Shyrngeh. But their new house which has been added to their old one in front of it is altogether of the bungalow type. This new house is entered from a porch in front, leading to the central room which is used as parlour. The myntri generally sits here with his friends, round the fire-place, which is not a Dypei but a hearth in European style. The kitchen is beyond this room. Bedrooms open from the drawing room to the sides.

A plan of the village showing the distribution of the various types of hut in Mawphlang is given below. From the plan it will be found that out of the 160 houses in the village, inhabited at present, the typical 'U'-type of huts form about 11·3 per cent.; the flattened 'U'-type about 35·0 per cent.; the intermediate type, which has totally given up the 'U'-shaped ground plan but has its interior of the old type, about 27·5 per cent. and the English bungalow type about 26·2 per cent. This data shows how rapidly the old type of Khasi hut is now changing.

